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THIRD READER.

PART I.

Sacred History.

REHOBAM, SON OF SOLOMON, ANGERS THE PEOPLE.

REHOBAM, the son of Solomon, succeeded his father, but he lost his kingdom by his folly, when it was already in a tottering state by the fault of his father. For Solomon had imposed on his people a very heavy tax, and when the people were not able to bear the tax, they asked the king to diminish it. Rehoboam had first proposed to do this.

The elders of the people advised the king to satisfy the people, but the younger men dissuaded him. Rehoboam, following the counsel of those of his own age, gave a harsh answer to the people, and rejected their demand.

TEN TRIBES ABANDON REHOBAM, AND CHOOSE A
NEW KING FOR THEMSELVES.

This led to a civil war: ten tribes quitted

Rehoboam, and appointed for themselves a king, Jeroboam, from the tribe Ephraim. Only two tribes remained faithful to Rehoboam, viz., the tribe of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin.

Thus the one kingdom of the Hebrews was broken up into two, those of Judah and of Israel.

Jeroboam, that he might turn away his people from the custom of going up to Jerusalem, set up a separate religion for them, and led them to the worship of false gods. Thus a golden calf was set up at Bethel and another at Dan.

SHORT DURATION OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL, AND ITS END.

The kingdom of Israel did not stand long, because all its kings, without exception, were bad.

God often sent prophets to them to warn them, and call them back to the true faith, but they did not attend to the warnings of the prophets. Indeed, they treated them with insult, and inflicted punishments and death upon them.

On which account, God, being very wroth with them, handed them over into the power

of their enemies. They were conquered by Shalmanezzer, King of the Assyrians, who destroyed Samaria, overcoming Hoshea, and put an end to his kingdom, B.C. 718. He led away the Israelites captives into Assyria, and dispersed them throughout his kingdom.

NOTE.—Subjoined is a chronological list of the kings of the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

Kings of Judah.

- 976. Rehoboam.
- 959. Abijah.
- 956. Asa.
- 915. Jehoshaphat.
- 891. Jehoram.
- 884. Ahaziah.
- 883. Athaliah.
- 877. Jehoash.
- 887. Amaziah.
- 808. Uzziah.
- 756. Jotham.
- 741. Ahaz.
- 726. Hezekiah.
- 718. Sennacherib invades
Judæa.
- 697. Manasseh.
- 642. Amon.
- 640. Josiah.
- 609. Jehoahaz or Jehoiakim.
- 606. Expedition of Nebuchad-
nezzar.
- 598. Zedekiah.

Kings of Israel.

- 587. Destruction of the king-
dom of Judah.
- 976. Jeroboam.
- 955. Nadab.
- 953. Baasha.
- 931. Elah.
- 930. Zimri-Omri.
- 919. Ahab.
- 896. Ahaziah.
- 895. Jehoram.
- 883. Jehu.
- 865. Jehoahaz.
- 839. Joash.
- 823. Jeroboam II.
- 771. Zachariah.
- 770. Shallum-Menahem.
- 759. Pekahiah.
- 757. Pekah.
- 730. Hoshea.
- 721. Taking of Samaria after
three years' siege. End
of kingdom of Israel.

Stories of Hebrew Heroes and Heroines.

THE STORY OF JOB.

THERE was a man of the land of Uz, named Job, or Ayooob. He was a simple, upright man, fearing God and departing from evil.

To him were born seven sons and three daughters. His property consisted of seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very large number of adherents and servants. Job was a great man, and a man of substance among all those in the East,

His sons made banquets and feasts each in his own house. And they called their sisters, that they might eat and drink with them. And Job blessed them, and offered sacrifices for each of them.

On a certain day, when the sons of Job came to assist in the worship of God, Satan was amongst them. The Lord addressed him, and said, "Whence comest thou?" Satan replied, "From walking up and down the earth." The Lord said to him, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, and that there is no one like him

on earth ; a man, simple, upright, fearing the Lord, and departing from evil ? ” Satan thereupon answered and said, “ Shall Job fear the Lord in vain ? Hast thou not protected him and all his substance, and blessed all the work of his hands, and increased his possessions ? But stretch forth thy hand, and touch all his substance, and see if he bless thee.”

One day, as his sons and daughters were eating and drinking in the house of Job's firstborn son, a messenger came from him to say, “ The oxen were ploughing, and the she asses were feeding near them, when the Sabeans, or wandering Arabs, made a raid, or sudden attack, and swept away everything, killing the young men with the sword ; and I alone have escaped to announce this to thee.” While he was yet speaking, another messenger came up and said, “ Fire of God has fallen from heaven, and has burned the sheep and shepherds, and I alone have escaped to announce it to thee.”

Then Job arose, and rent his garment, and having shorn his head, falling prostrate on the earth, he worshipped, and said, “ Naked was I born, and naked shall I return to the earth. The Lord gave : the Lord hath taken away ;

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blessed be the name of the Lord." In all these troubles Job did not sin with his lips, nor was he guilty of anything against the Lord.

It happened one day that when the sons of God came and stood round God, Satan came among them, and God spake to him, saying, "Whence comest thou?" Satan replied, "From walking up and down the earth." And the Lord said to Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is no one like him on earth, a man, simple and upright, and fearing the Lord, and still keeping his innocence? But thou hast moved me against him, that I should afflict him." Satan answered Him, "What will not a man give for his life? Stretch forth Thy hand and touch his flesh and his bone, and Thou wilt then see if he will bless Thee."

Therefore the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in thy hand; but spare his life." Therefore Satan, departing from the presence of the Lord, struck Job with a dreadful ulcer, from the sole of his foot to the top of his head. And Job shaved his head, and sat on a dunghill. But his wife said to him, "Thou remainest still steadfast in thy singleness of heart. Curse the Lord, and die." Job replied, "Thou hast spoken

as a foolish woman. If we receive good from the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?" In all these things Job did not sin with his lips.

Therefore, three friends of Job, hearing the evils that had happened, each of them came from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They agreed to accost him together, in order to comfort him. When they drew nigh to him, and looked at him, they did not know him; and lifting up their voices, they wept; and rending their garments, they strewed ashes on their head. And they sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him. For they saw that his grief was exceeding great.

After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed his day, and spake: "Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night on which it was said, A man is begotten. Let that day be turned into darkness. Let darkness and the shadow of death cover it, and let it be filled with bitterness. Let its stars be darkened; let it not see light or the light of dawn. Why was I born, and nursed? For now I should be at peace and

asleep, and I should sleep with the kings of the earth."

Eliphaz replied: "If we speak to thee, perhaps it will pain thee. Behold, thou hast taught and comforted many. But now, when a plague has arisen upon thee, thou hast given way. Where is thy courage, and thy patience, and perfection? When has the innocent ever perished or come to nought? On the contrary, it is the evil who perish, consumed by the wrath of God. The roar of the lion has been hushed, and the tigers have perished. In the visions of the night a sudden fear filled me, and my flesh shuddered with terror. Some one stood before me whose form I knew not, and spake with a gentle voice, Shall man be purer than his Maker, who finds wickedness even in His angels?"

Job replied: "What is my strength, that I should hope? or what my end, that I should prolong my life?

"I know that man is not justified before God. Who is it that has placed the pillars of earth, and the stars as signs, and stretched out the heavens, and walketh on the waves of the sea? Who made Arcturus and Orion, and the constel-

lations? Who did all these wonders that are not to be numbered?

“Why hast Thou done this, O God? Thou whose wrath no one can resist. If I call upon Him, I do not think He will hear my voice. In the whirlwind He will crush me.

“While there is still breath in my body, I will not speak against the Lord. Till I die, I shall not depart from my innocence.

“Let my adversary be as a wicked man. God will not set free his soul. God will not hear him. This is the part of the wicked. Their children shall perish by the sword or famine, and their widows shall not weep for them.

“Where is wisdom found? Man does not know its price. It is not found in the abyss, or to be compared with purple and precious stones. It is beyond gold and all treasure, hidden from the eyes of all living. God understands its way, who measures the winds and the waters. Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding.”

Some words of doubt and pride had escaped the lips of the patriarch Job respecting the justice of God. Elihu, a young Edomite, defends

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the Lord's equity in splendid language, and calls on Job to repent.

But the colloquy is suddenly interrupted. From the midst of a whirlwind the voice of the Almighty speaks to these men who presume to discuss His justice.

“Where were ye when I laid the foundations of the earth? Speak, if thou knowest.

“When the morning stars sang together for joy; when I enclosed the sea within limits, and said, Thus far only shalt thou go.

“Did you command the dews? or can ye walk in the abyss of the sea? Are the gates of death open to you? Speak, if ye can. Where is the dwelling-place of light and of darkness? Doubtless ye know, for ye were then born.

“Have you found Orion and the Pleiades, and called down the lightning? To whom has the thunder answered, Here I am?

“Have you given pasture to the young lion, or food to the wild asses, or tamed the bull? Does the eagle that soars to heaven obey your commands? Have you given to the horse its strength and its courage? Have you clothed his neck with thunder? He bounds light as the grasshopper, and his neighing is the voice

of terror. He strikes the earth with his hoof, and laughs at the sword that threatens him. The arrows fly, the spears flash, and with his angry hoof he spurns the ground. But the trumpet sounds, he neighs and rears, from afar off he smells the scent of battle. At length he darts forward, and joins in the strife."

Before this splendid description of creation Job bows his head. But God pardons; He heals all his evils; He gives him twofold for all that he had lost; and the patriarch lives happily one hundred and forty years after the terrible trial under which he did not sink.

HISTORY OF ELIJAH.

At the time (B.C. 919) when the impious Ahab occupied the throne of Israel, there lived at Gilead the prophet Elijah, called the Tishbite, from a town of Naphtali. Elijah came to find Ahab, and said to him, "By the Lord God of Israel, there shall not fall during these years either dew or rain, excepting by the word that shall come out of my mouth."

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Then Elijah retired to the banks of the torrent of Cherith, opposite the Jordan. Crows brought him his food morning and evening, and he drank the water of the torrent. But soon, as no rain fell, the torrent dried up.

Thereupon the Lord commanded him to retire to Zarephath, not far from Tyre and Sidon. At the gates of the town the prophet met a poor widow picking up wood. He asked her for a little bread and water. The poor woman answered: "I have only a little meal in a pitcher, and a little oil in a cruse (or flask). I came here to gather two pieces of wood, to prepare a little more food for me and my son, and then we shall die."

Moved by these words, which showed so much resignation in the midst of so much misery, the prophet said to her: "Fear not, for the meal which is in this pitcher shall not fail, and the oil which is in this cruse (or flask) shall not lessen, until the day when the Lord shall cause rain to fall on the earth." Nor did the poor widow lack food from that day while the famine lasted. But soon after, her child died. Elijah, touched by pity, prayed to the Lord, and spreading himself three times on the dead body of the

youth, he recalled the soul into the body, and restored the dead boy to life.

Nevertheless, three years of drought and famine had been passed. Elijah left his hiding-place, for the Lord said, "Go and find Ahab, and I will cause the rain to fall upon the earth." The king of Israel, aware of his arrival, went to meet him, and said to him with wrath, "Are you not the man who troubles all Israel?" "It is not I," answered the holy man, "who has troubled all Israel: it is thou, it is the house of thy father, when you abandoned the commandment of the Lord, in order to worship Baal. Now assemble the people on Mount Carmel, and now call together the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets that Jezebel feeds at her table."

The king consented, and the people flocked in crowds and assembled at the foot of Mount Carmel and on the sea shore; and then, addressing the king, the priests, and the people, "How long," said the prophet, "will ye lean now on this side, now on that? If the Eternal is God, adore Him, if Baal is God, follow him."

The people made no response, and Elijah

* *

continued: "I am now alone among the prophets of the Almighty, whereas the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty in number. Nevertheless, let us have two victims, we will prepare them without setting fire, and the God who will consume His own burnt offering will be the true God." From the morning until the middle of the day the prophets invoked their idol. The more it was insensible to their prayers, the more they cried unto it, dancing round it and cutting themselves deeply in its honour; whilst Elijah intermingled with their prayers his terrible irony, calling out in a loud voice, "Baal your god is doubtless on business or travelling, perhaps he is asleep and requires to be woke;" but Baal was deaf. When the hour of midday was passed, Elijah said to the people, "Come with me." He took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes, built an altar, dug a ditch around it, prepared the burnt offering, poured water over it three times, almost filling the ditch, and then he prayed thus. "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show that Thou art the God of Israel, that I am thy servant, and that I do all these things by Thy order." Instantly the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the holocaust, the wood, the

stones, and even the dust, and the water which filled the ditch. The people, much agitated, cried out, "It is the Almighty who is God! the Almighty is God!" Elijah then ordered that the false prophets should be seized, and caused them to be brought to the torrent of Kishon, where they were all put to death. He then said to Ahab, "Drink and eat, for I hear the sound of a great rain." He then went up on Mount Carmel, and leaning on the ground, placed his head on his knees, and said to his servant, "Go and look out on to the sea." The servant having been, came back and said, "There is nothing." "Return seven times," said the prophet, and on the seventh time a small cloud was seen rising above the sea. Elijah at once sent his servant to say to Ahab, "Harness your horses to your chariot; make haste, lest the tempest overtake you." Ahab departed, and had only just entered Jezreel when torrents of rain came down and refreshed the earth and allayed the dust.

Jezebel, irritated with the massacre of the prophets of Baal, her god, announced to Elijah that the next day at the same hour he should die in the same way.

The prophet, alarmed, fled to the desert,

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and after having made a day's journey in it, he sat down under a bush, overcome with fatigue, and called on death to relieve him. "It is enough, O Lord," he said, "it is enough. Take my soul, for I am not better than my fathers," and he went to sleep. Twice an angel of the Lord drew him from sleep, and said to him, "Arise, eat, for thy way is long." He found, as the words indicated, near his head, a pitcher full of water and a loaf baked under ashes. This miraculous food supported his strength, and after walking forty days and forty nights, he reached Mount Horeb, and hid in a cavern. He was there when the voice of God called him, saying, "What doest thou, Elijah?" The prophet answered, "The children of Israel have deserted Thee, O Lord; they have overthrown Thy altars, and struck Thy prophets with the sword. I alone have escaped, but they seek me to slay me." The voice resumed, "Go forth from the cavern, go up the mountain, and thou shalt be in the presence of the Lord."

Hereupon there passed before him a powerful wind, a terrible tempest, that shook the mountain and split its stones; but Jehovah was not in the storm.

After the tempest the earth shook, but Jehovah was not in the earthquake. After the earth had shaken fire passed before him ; but Jehovah was not in the fire.

After the fire came as it were a gentle breath of air. Elijah heard it, and covering his face with his cloak, he went forth and stopped at the mouth of the cavern. Then the voice said to him, "Elijah, what doest thou? Return by the way of the desert towards Damascus. Thou shalt anoint Hazael, king of Syria; Jehu, son of Nimshi, to be king of Israel; Elisha, son of Shaphat, to be a prophet in thy stead. Whosoever shall escape the sword of Hazael, shall be killed by Jehu; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, shall be slain by Elisha; but I have kept back for myself seven thousand men who have not bent the knee to Baal."

Accordingly Elijah set out, and soon after met Elisha, son of Shaphat, who was himself driving a plough. He cast on his shoulders his prophet's mantle, and only left him time, before taking him away, to bid adieu to his father. "Go," said Elijah, "and return, for I have done for thee what was in my power."

Some time after the king of Israel added an-

other to his many crimes. Naboth of Jezreel possessed at Jezreel a vineyard near the palace of Ahab. The king said to him, "Give up to me thy vineyard, that I may make a garden of it. I will give thee a better one, or its value in money." "God forbid," replied Naboth, "that I should give thee the inheritance of my fathers." Ahab, as weak in resisting his fancies as his passions, gave himself up to a grief unworthy of a king, casting himself on a couch, and refusing all food. When the queen knew the cause of this great grief, she said to the king, "Arise, and eat in peace, I undertake to get thee this vineyard." To effect this, Jezebel gained over two children of Belial, who accused Naboth of having blasphemed against God and the king. On this false testimony the unhappy man was led out of the town and stoned. Ahab took immediate possession of this vineyard he had so coveted, and had gained by such unhappy means. But suddenly he encountered Elijah. "Wilt thou then eternally pursue me?" exclaimed the king, betraying thus the disturbance of his conscience. "Am I thy enemy?" "Thou art," replied the prophet, "because thou hast done harm in the sight of the Lord, and

this is what the Almighty says: 'I will cut off from the house of Ahab, even to the last animal; I will make it like unto that of Jeroboam and that of Baasha, because thy crimes have made Me wrath, and thou hast caused Israel to sin. The dogs will eat Jezebel in the camp of Naboth. If Ahab dies in the town, he will be eaten up by dogs; if he dies in the fields, he will be devoured by the birds of the air.' "

The prediction of Elijah was speedily accomplished. Ramoth of Gilead had not been restored to the Israelites after the alliance had been concluded between Ahab and Benhadad. The King of Israel formed the project of reducing it, and drew into this war Jehoshaphat, King of Judah. Ahab had consulted four hundred of his prophets, and all announced that victory would be his; but Jehoshaphat had Micaiah called, and the man of God predicted the defeat and death of the King of Israel. "I have seen," said he, "all Israel dispersed through the mountains, like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord has said: 'They have no head; let each man go back to his own dwelling.' " Ahab, angered at this, caused the prophet to

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be cast into prison. But on the day of battle he did not dare to keep on his royal vestments. at the beginning of the action he disguised himself, and begged Jehoshaphat to keep his royal vestments. He hoped thus to escape the death with which he was threatened, but his precaution was vain: an arrow, shot at random, reached him, and wounded him mortally through the joint of his armour. "Turn the reins," said Ahab to his driver: "retire from here, I am mortally wounded."

But the fight lasted all the day, and the King of Israel, with his face turned against the Syrians, remained in his chariot, which he deluged with his blood. He died in the evening. His body was carried away and buried in Samaria. His chariot was washed in the ponds of the town, and the dogs licked his blood, according to the word of the prophet. Ahab had reigned twenty-two years, and was succeeded by his son Ahaziah.

Ahaziah began to rule over Israel in the nineteenth year of the reign of Jehoshaphat (896 B.C.). He did evil before the Lord, and walked in the wicked ways of Ahab and of Jezebel. Thus scorning to place his trust in the Almighty, he

sent to consult Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, to know if he would be healed of a wound he had received in falling from a high window of his palace. Elijah, warned by an angel, went out to meet the king's messengers, and said to them, "Is there no God in Israel, that ye go to consult the idol of Ekron? Therefore the king shall not rise from the bed on which he lies, but he shall assuredly die." "Who has said this?" asked the king of his people when they brought him this message. "It is a man covered with a mantle of hair-skin," they replied, "and girt with a leather girdle." It is Elijah the Tishbite," exclaimed the king; and he sent a captain with fifty men to seize the prophet.

The captain went up to Elijah, who was seated on the summit of a mountain, and said to him, "Man of God, the king commands you to come down." "If I am a man of God," he replied, "let fire come down from heaven and consume you, with your fifty men." And immediately fire came down from heaven and consumed them. Ahaziah sent another captain with fifty soldiers, who said to Elijah, "Man of God, the king has commanded me to say to

you, 'Make haste to come down.'” Elijah replied again, “If I am a man of God, let the fire of heaven consume you, with your fifty men.” And immediately fire from heaven came down and consumed them. Then Ahaziah sent a third captain, who, having come before Elijah, knelt before him and said this prayer: “Man of God, save my life, and also that of the servants who are with me. Fire has come down from heaven and consumed the first two captains, and the fifty men commanded by each of them; but I pray you now to save my life.”

At the same time the angel of the Lord came and said to Elijah, “Come down, and fear not.” Accordingly Elijah went to see the king, and addressed him thus: “Behold what the Lord saith: ‘Because thou hast sent people to consult Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, as if there were no God in Israel, thou shalt not rise from the bed on which thou liest, but thou shalt assuredly die.’” This event came to pass, and Ahaziah died childless, after a reign of two years, leaving the throne to his brother Jehoram (B.C. 895).

The mission of Elijah was drawing near its close. Accompanied by Elisha, from whom he

tried several times, but in vain, to part, he came one day to the banks of the Jordan. There, taking his cloak, he struck the waters with it, and they parted asunder to let him cross. Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask of me what thou wishest, that thou mayest obtain it before we part." "Let me have a share in thy spirit," answered Elisha; and as they were walking and talking together, they were suddenly separated by a fiery chariot and horses, which carried up Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind of flame. Elisha, seeing them thus ascend, exclaimed, "My father, my father, thou who wert the chariot of Israel and its guide!" But soon he lost sight of Elijah for ever.

Then, taking the mantle that Elijah had let fall upon him, he smote the waters of the Jordan with it, and again those waters divided, and Elisha passed over dry foot. The children of the prophets, who were in Jericho, opposite that place, having witnessed this miracle, exclaimed, "The spirit of Elijah has rested on Elisha;" and immediately coming before him, they prostrated themselves at his feet, with profound respect, and said, "There are among thy servants fifty strong men who can go and seek

thy master; for perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has carried him off, and cast him on a mountain or in a valley." Elisha answered them, "Do not send." But, persisting in their demands, they forced him to yield. They sent, therefore, fifty men, who, having sought the body of Elijah for three days, did not find him. Thereupon they returned to Elisha, who once more said to them: "Did I not tell you, 'Do not send'?"

The inhabitants of Jericho said also to him: "O lord, this town is pleasant and commodious, but its water is bad and the land barren." Elisha answered them: "Bring me a new vessel, and put salt in it." When he had received it, he went to the wells and cast the salt into the waters, saying, "Behold what the Lord saith: 'I have made these waters healthy, and henceforth they will neither cause death nor barrenness.'" And these waters became henceforth healthy, as they remain to the present day, according to the words of Elisha.

From Jericho, the new prophet started for Bethel. While he was going up towards the latter city, some children issued and insulted

him, saying, "Go to, thou bald head! Go to, thou bald head!" Elisha cursed them in the name of the Lord, and immediately two bears, coming out of a neighbouring wood, devoured forty-two of them. In this manner Elisha gave signs of his being the successor of Elijah.

Elisha continued to flourish during the successful reign of Jehoshaphat, who destroyed idolatry in Judæa, and overcame the Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites, who fell on each other and perished by mutual slaughter.

ELISHA.

Jehoshaphat was succeeded by Jehoram (B.C. 891), in whose reign idolatry was brought back to Jerusalem, through the influence of his wife Athalia. Thereupon Judah was afflicted with calamities, and Jehoram himself carried off by disease. Ahaziah succeeded him in 884, but under the evil direction of Athaliah, he persisted in the wicked counsels of the house of Ahab, and died after a reign of one year.

Thus idolatry was spread all over Judah and Israel, and the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob repudiated the God of their fathers

and deserted His law. Nevertheless, the Lord sought to strike the minds of the Hebrews by the ministry of His prophets, combining the merciful and the terrible, and Elisha was engaged in performing continual and astonishing lessons. Thus, on a certain day, he multiplied the oil of a poor widow who sold it, and was thus able to pay her creditors and feed her children. Another time he predicted to a pious woman the unexpected birth of a son: shortly after, this child having died, Elisha restored him to life. Again, during a famine, he fed the whole population of Gilgal with twenty barley loaves, bread of the first-fruits, and new corn. On another occasion he caused an iron hatchet, lost by one of the children of the prophets, to float on the surface of the water; and he also healed Naaman, the general of the armies of the king of Syria. This man was a leper, who, following the directions of the prophet, went down to the Jordan, plunged into it seven times, and came out with his body clean and pure as that of a child.

In a war that ensued between Benhadad, King of Syria, and the King of Israel, Jehoram, brother of Ahaziah, and son of Ahab, the king of

Israel, defeated the plots of his adversary by the counsels of Elisha. Benhadad having learnt that one man alone was the cause of his failure, caused a large body of horsemen to set out to seize the prophet in the town of Dothan. But Elisha struck them with blindness, and led them into Samaria, where, recovering their sight, they saw themselves prisoners of the King of Israel.

Some time after this, Benhadad came and laid siege to Samaria, and the famine was so severe in that land that two mothers agreed to eat their children. Then Elisha said to Jehoram, stricken with fear: "Listen to what the Almighty saith: 'To-morrow, at the same hour, the bushel of pure flour shall be given for a shekel, and two bushels of barley for a shekel, at the gates of Samaria.'" The prophecy was literally accomplished, for, during the night, the Lord caused a great noise of horses and chariots to be heard in the camp of the Syrians; and the soldiers, thinking themselves surprised, fled away, abandoning tents, horses, provisions, and baggage.

After this Elisha went to Damascus, where Benhadad lay sick. The King of Syria, learning

that the prophet was in his capital, sent to him his servant Hazael with rich presents ; but the man of God could not keep under the agitation he felt at the sight of Hazael, and shedding tears, he said : " I weep, because I know all the evil thou wilt do to the children of Israel : thou wilt burn their strong towns, thou wilt slay their young men with the sword, thou wilt slaughter their women, and thou wilt dash their little children against the ground ; for thou wilt be king."

This happened as it was foretold, for the very next day Hazael strangled his master, and reigned in his stead. He immediately attacked the kingdom of Israel, and occupied Ramoth-gilead. Jehoram, supported by Ahaziah, son of Athaliah, who was then reigning in Judah, tried to retake the town ; but he received a wound, and returned to Jezreel, accompanied by Ahaziah, to have his wound dressed. He had left in command of his troops, Jehu, his general, whom the Lord had chosen to carry out his threats against the wicked house of Ahab. By the command of the Lord, Elisha sent one of the children of the prophets to Ramoth-gilead, to consecrate Jehu king of Israel, and to say to him : " Thou shalt cut off the house of Ahab,

thy master, and I will revenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel."

Jehu immediately marched on this place. Jehoram, though sick, got up on his chariot, as well as the King of Judah, and advanced to meet the rebel, whom he found in the field of Naboth. But the two kings were surrounded with treachery, which they soon discovered, and took to flight. Jehu pursued them, and piercing Jehoram with an arrow, left him dead. Ahaziah was also wounded, and went to Megiddo, where he died.

After this the whole house of Ahab perished at the hand of Jehu, except Joash, the last child of Ahaziah, who was torn from the arms of his nurse at the moment they were about to kill him. Joash was kept hid in the house of the Lord for six years, and then consecrated king, his enemies being put to death. Joash was obedient to the law of God for a time, but at length gave away to idolatry, which brought misfortune on Judah, and a violent death on himself (837).

Meanwhile Jehoahaz, King of Israel, was also following an evil course, and was punished at the hands of the Lord. His son Jehoash took

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Jerusalem from Amaziah, king of Judah, and carried to Samaria all the treasure of the temple. His reign of sixteen years was very successful, and made remarkable by the last prophecies of Elisha (823 B.C.).

STORY OF JUDITH.

ASAR - HADDON, after having once conquered Judah, did not disturb it; but Saosduchinus, his son and successor, came back to attack it. He sent over his general Holophernes to subdue the western country. All the cities, overcome with terror, yielded to the conqueror; the tribe of Judah alone, trusting in the Lord, ventured to bid defiance to the enemy.

Thereupon Holophernes advanced and laid siege to Bethulia, a strong city situated on a mountain, and occupied by Israelites faithful to God. The Assyrian general, having caused an aqueduct to be cut off which supplied water to the town, the inhabitants were reduced to the last extremity, and would have surrendered at once, but for the brave exhortations of their commander, Hosea, who persuaded them to wait five days longer for the mercy of the Lord.

There was at that time in the town a young widow gifted with great beauty and wisdom. For three years she lived retired from the world, in grief and tears, fasting every day, except Sabbaths and feast days, and wearing a hair shirt. Learning the extremity to which her fellow-citizens were reduced, Judith formed the plan of delivering them. In the evening she warned Hosea and the elders of the city that she was going forth from Bethulia. She asked them to pray for her, but she did not tell them her plan. For the first time in three years she laid aside her hair shirt, resumed a festive dress, and anointed herself with precious ointments. Then, after having placed herself by prayer under the protection of the Almighty, she set out, escorted by only one female servant, who carried some provisions, and she presented herself at the camp of the Assyrians. The outposts arrested her, and conducted her to Holophernes.

The enemy's general was touched with the charm of her language and the beauty of her features. He gave orders that she should be led into the tent where his treasure was kept, and at her request he allowed her to retire every

evening to a sequestered spot, to pray to her God.

Judith passed three days in this manner, taking nothing but the provisions she had brought with her, in order not to be defiled with food served up by infidel hands. On the fourth day Holophernes gave a great banquet, and caused Judith to come into his tent; but being overcome with the fumes of wine, he almost immediately fell into a deep sleep. The attendants thereupon retired, and Judith, who was left alone with him, seized his sword, suspended to a pillar at the head of his bed, and, striking him twice, cut off his head. She came forth directly after, and the guards, who were wont to see her pass every evening with her servant, did not stop her. She ran towards Bethulia, exclaiming, "Open, open the gate! The Lord is with us!"

A large crowd gathered instantly round Judith, who said to them, "Here is the head of Holophernes, general of the Assyrians. The living God is my witness that His angel has watched over me, and brings me back safe and untouched among you." This unexpected deliverance was hailed by the acclamations of the people. The

very next day the inhabitants, excited by the exhortations of Judith, went forth, fully armed, raising loud shouts and sounding the trumpet. The Assyrian army, dispirited by the death of their general, ran away in all directions, and was cut to pieces. The plunder of their camp took more than thirty days to remove.

The happy news spread rapidly through all the towns of Judah. The high-priest came himself from Jerusalem, with the elders of the people, to felicitate Judith, and said to her : "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem and the joy of Israel ; thou art the honour of our people, and thou shalt be blessed for ever."

THE STORY OF JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER.

THOLA, judge of Israel, governed the land for twenty-three years, and after the death of his successor, Jair, the Israelites gave themselves up to the worship of idols. But the Almighty punished them by the hands of the Ammonites, and they were led to repent and break their idols under the rule of Jephthah.

Jephthah was a man of Gilead, whom his brothers had cut off from their father's inheritance. Thereupon he had fled to the land of Tob, between Ammon and Syria, where, at the head of a band of houseless and penniless wanderers, the same as the modern Bedouins, he lived on the spoils he seized during his raids and robbing expeditions. His courage and his exploits drew upon him the attention of the elders of Gilead. They went to seek him, and said, "Come and be our guide to fight against the children of Ammon."

Jephthah forgot his former anger, and placed himself at the head of the Eastern tribes of Judah. But obeying, possibly without knowing it, the influence of Phœnician beliefs about the value of human sacrifice, he made an impious vow before he engaged in battle. This vow was to slay and sacrifice to the Lord the first person who should issue from his house to meet him.

The Ammonites were conquered, and Jephthah destroyed twenty of their cities. On his return, the fame of his success had spread throughout Israel, and a great crowd went forth to meet him. His only daughter, proud and delighted,

walked at the head, amidst the harmony and clash of musical instruments, leading her companions to meet her father. Jephthah beheld her, and in his grief rent his garments. "Ah, my daughter!" he exclaimed, "thou art a source of deadly grief to me, for I have opened my mouth to the Lord against thee, and I cannot recall my words." "My father," she replied, "do unto me according to thy words."

She only asked the favour to retire for two months, with her companions, to the mountains of Gilead, to weep over her misfortune, in dying without being a wife or a mother. After the lapse of the two months she came back, and her father accomplished his fatal vow by putting her to death. The next year, on the same day, her companions took mourning again, and this custom was long preserved in the tribe of Manasseh.

JONAH.

At the time when Judah and Israel were warned by their prophets of the approach of calamities as a punishment of their sins, another prophet, Jonah, appeared, who threatened like

misfortunes against Nineveh, the great capital of the Assyrians.

God spake to the prophet Jonah : " Arise, Jonah, son of Amittai, and go to the great city of Nineveh ; let it hear my threats ; the cry of its wickedness has reached up even unto me." Jonah, frightened with the dangers of this mission, tried to avoid it by flight. He went down to Joppa, and embarked on a Phœnician vessel about to sail for Tarsus ; but the Lord sent a furious wind on the sea, which placed the ship in great danger of foundering. The sailors cast lots, to see who it was that drew down on their heads the wrath of heaven. The lot fell on Jonah. Recognising the hand of the Lord, Jonah submitted to his fate.

Almost as soon as he had been cast into the sea the tempest ceased. But the Scriptures inform us that a sea monster followed the vessel and swallowed Jonah. Nevertheless, God preserved his life, and after three days it cast up Jonah on the sea-shore. The prophet received again the command to go to Nineveh, and, obeying, at length he started for the capital. As soon as he had passed through the gates, he exclaimed, " In three days Nineveh will be

destroyed!" As long as the sun remained above the horizon he traversed the streets of the great city, repeating his ominous words, "In three days Nineveh will be no more!" On hearing this, the corrupt population of the city was seized with fear; the prince himself gave the example of repentance; a solemn fast was proclaimed; and the Lord, appeased by this penitence of a whole people, spared the guilty city.

HISTORY OF TOBIT.

Among the captives who were led away into Assyria was Tobit. Tobit had kept diligently the law of God from his youth upwards. When he was a child he did nothing that was childish. At length, when all the people went after the golden calves that Jeroboam, King of Israel, had made, and had set up for the people to worship, he alone kept aloof, and, hastening to the temple of the Lord, worshipped God.

TOBIT KEEPS HIS FAITH IN THE MIDST OF THE GENTILES.

When Tobit was grown up he married a wife,

and had a son, whom he taught from his infancy to fear God and to abstain from all sin.

When he was led away into captivity, he always kept the same piety to God. He prayed daily for all good things for his companions, and he exhorted them, by his salutary counsels, to the worship of God. Out of humanity he gave ten talents (£2040) to a certain Gabel, having received them as a gift from the king.

TOBIT BURIES THE DEAD AT THE PERIL OF HIS
LIFE.

When a new king, Sennacherib, ascended the throne of Assyria, he showed himself a great enemy of the Israelites, persecuting them and slaying them, and forbidding that they should be buried.

During this time of trouble Tobit visited his brethren, consoled the sufferers, helping the poor with his means, and likewise burying their dead.

When this matter was announced to the king, he commanded that Tobit should be slain, and stripped of all his goods.

But Tobit was hid away, with his wife and

his child, and thus he escaped the wrath of the king.

TOBIT PERSEVERES IN THE PRACTICE OF HIS DUTY,
IN DEFIANCE OF HIS FRIENDS.

On a certain feast day, when he had prepared a banquet in his house, he sent his son to invite some of his friends to dinner.

Returning to Tobit, his son announced that an Israelite was lying dead at the door.

Jumping up, Tobit carried the body secretly into the house, in order to bury it that night.

His friends dissuaded him from doing this; but Tobit, fearing God more than the king, did not desist from his purpose.

TOBIT BECOMES BLIND, AND BEARS THIS AFFLICTION
WITH PATIENCE.

Tobit, tired with carrying out his usual duties, leant against the wall and slept. By chance, the refuse from a swallow's nest fell into his eyes, whilst sleeping, and thus he became blind.

God permitted him to be visited by this affliction, that he might be a bright example of patience for the imitation of posterity.

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For Tobit bare his blindness so patiently, that no man ever heard him complain, nor did he persist the less in worshipping God.

TOBIT HAS THE GREATEST ABHORRENCE OF THEFT.

The wife of Tobit, weaving cloth, was gathering things necessary for that purpose. On a certain day she brought back a goat, which she had bought as a reward of her labours.

Tobit heard the goat bleating, and fearing lest the goat had been stolen, he said to his wife: "See that this goat has not been carried off from a neighbour. If so, restore it to its owner, for it is a crime to live by thieving." So greatly did this upright man hate all wickedness.

ADVICE OF TOBIT TO HIS SON.

Tobit, thinking himself about to die, called his son. "Hear, O my son," he said, "the words of your much-loved father, and may these things remain fixed for ever in your memory, in order that you may live a wiser life. Each day think about God, and take care lest you sin against Him, and neglect His precepts. Have pity on the poor, in order that God may have pity on

you ; be beneficent and liberal as far as you are able. If riches are plentiful with thee, give largely ; if scarce, give little, but freely. Beware of pride, nor allow it to slide into your mind or speech."

CONTINUATION OF THE ADVICE OF TOBIT TO
HIS SON.

"That which you would not have done to you, O my son, do not unto others.

"If any one does you a service, at once repay him with a recompense.

"Always ask counsel from a learned man. Never associate with bad people.

"When I shall quit this life, bury my body. Be mindful of your mother, remembering the sufferings she underwent when she bore you in her womb ; and when she too will have died, place her in the same grave with me."

TOBIT ANNOUNCES TO HIS SON THAT HE HAS LENT
TEN TALENTS TO GABEL.

"This also I tell thee, O my son, that I have lent ten talents of silver to Gabel, who now dwells at Rage, a city of the Medes."

Thereupon the young man rejoined : "I will

do all, O my father, that thou commandest. But I know not how I shall recover that money from Gabel, for neither do I know him, nor does he know me, nor do I know the way to go into Media."

Tobit answered his son thus : "I have a note for Gabel, which, when thou showest him, he will directly restore the money to thee. But seek for a trusty man who shall be thy guide on the road."

THE ANGEL RAPHAEL OFFERS HIMSELF TO
ACCOMPANY TOBIAS.

Tobias going forth, found a young man standing, and attired ready for the march. For it was the custom, and is still, in these countries, to draw up their clothes and tie them in their belt, thus shortening them to the knee, when they are about to undertake a march, in order to do so with greater ease. Tobias not knowing that this stranger was the angel of the Lord, saluted him, and said : " Whence art thou, my good young man ? "

" I am," replied the angel, " one of the Israelites."

"Dost thou know," continued Tobias, "the way that leads into Media?"

"I do," replied the stranger, "and I have often enjoyed the hospitality of Gabel, who dwells there."

Tobias, delighted at this intelligence, announced it to his father, who, pressing the young man, asked him if he would be a companion on the road to his son, at the same time offering a reward. The young stranger expressed himself ready to do so. Therefore Tobias bade adieu to his parents, and they both went on their way, and a dog followed them.

FEARS OF THE MOTHER OF TOBIAS.

When Tobias had departed, his mother began to weep and to lament bitterly, because her husband had sent away her son. "Why," she said, "why hast thou robbed our old age of its comfort? It would be better to lack that money which thou hast sent our son to recover: it was enough for us to be suffered to enjoy the sight of our son."

To this her husband replied: "Weep not, thy son will arrive safe in Media, and he will return safe to us. God will send His angel, who will give him a prosperous journey."

His wife, quieted by these words, kept silence.

TOBIAS IS SAVED FROM A MONSTROUS FISH.

Meanwhile Tobias and the angel arrived at the river Tigris, and when the young man had approached to wash his feet, behold a monstrous fish darted at him, as if about to devour him. Tobias, frightened at the sight of this fish, exclaimed: "O Lord, he has attacked me; to whom the angel replied: "Take a string and draw it to thee."

The fish, drawn on the bank, gasped for a short time, and then expired. Thereupon the angel ordered the skin of the fish to be carefully preserved, as a useful medicine, after which they cooked part of its flesh, to be eaten on the way.

TOBIAS COMES TO THE TOWN OF ECBATANA.

When they approached the town that was named Ecbatana, Tobias said to the angel: "At whose house dost thou wish that we should abide in this city?"

The angel replied: "There is here a certain man, thy relation, called Raguel: he will receive us as guests. He has an only daughter, whom you must make your wife. Ask her of her father,

nor do I doubt but that he will readily agree to your request. For God intends you to contract this marriage, and all the riches of Raguel will come down to you by right of inheritance."

TOBIAS IS RECEIVED IN THE HOUSE OF RAGUEL,
HIS RELATION.

Raguel received them joyfully, and, looking at Tobias, he said to his wife, "How like this young man is to our relation!"

Then, turning to his guests, he inquired: "Whence do you come, my good young men?" They answered: "We are Israelites (captives), from the city of Nineveh?" "Do you know Tobit?" continued their host. "We know him," was the reply. Then Raguel launched out into praises of Tobit, but the angel, interrupting him, said: "Tobit, of whom you are speaking, is the father of this young man." On hearing this, Raguel, embracing the young man, said: "I congratulate thee, my son, because thou art the son of a most worthy and excellent man." Whilst he spake, the wife and daughter of Raguel wept together.

MARRIAGE OF TOBIAS.

After this Raguel ordered a feast to be pre-

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pared, and while he was asking the guests to lie down, Tobias said: "I shall neither eat nor drink unless thou dost first promise to give me thy daughter." On hearing this, Raguel replied: "God has evidently heard my prayers and has brought thee here, that she may wed her relation, wherefore do not doubt that I will give her to thee as thy wife." Having pledged themselves by contract to this marriage, and giving thanks to God, they sat down to talk.

GABEL COMES TO THE MARRIAGE OF TOBIAS.

Raguel begged Tobias to remain with him fifteen days; and Tobias, acceding to his request, asked the angel to go alone to Gabel, and to recover the money from him.

Therefore the angel, having taken the camels, hastened to Raga, gave his note to Gabel, received the money, and brought him to the wedding of Tobias.

ANXIETY OF THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF TOBIAS.

Meanwhile the father of Tobias was anxious and solicitous in his mind because his son delayed his return. "Why is my son so long

coming back?" he said, sorrowing. "Perhaps Gabel is dead, and there is no one who will restore the money to him; I greatly grieve that he is absent from us." Saying these words, he and his wife began to weep.

The sorrow of the mother especially could not be comforted: she went forth every day from the house into all the neighbouring roads, where she hoped her son might return, that she might see him if possible, coming afar off.

TOBIAS RETURNS TO HIS FATHER.

Fifteen days having elapsed, Raguel wished still to detain Tobias; but Tobias said to him: "I pray thee, suffer me to go at once; thou knowest my parents are anxious in mind on my account." At length, being suffered to depart, by his father-in-law, he returned with his wife to his father. On the way, the angel said to him: "Directly thou hast entered thy home, worship God, and, embracing thy father, rub his eyes with the skin of the fish, which thou hast preserved: then his eyes will be healed, and thy father, rejoicing, shall see thee and the heaven."

ARRIVAL OF THE YOUNG TOBIAS.

While Tobias was approaching the town, his mother, as was her wont, was sitting on the summit of a hill, whence she could see a great distance. She saw him coming, and, running in, announced it to her husband.

Then the dog, who had accompanied Tobias on the road, ran before him, and coming on as a herald, caressed his old master, wagging his tail. The father, instantly rising up, began to run stumbling, and giving his hand to his servant, went forth to meet his son. After he had embraced him, they both began to weep with joy abundantly.

THE FATHER RECOVERS HIS SIGHT.

As soon as they had worshipped God, and had thanked Him, they sat down. Then Tobias rubbed the eyes of his father with the skin of the fish ; and after about half an hour a kind of membrane like that of an egg fell from his eyes, and after his son had drawn it off, the father recovered his sight immediately.

Thereupon all joyfully returned thanks to God ; their neighbours also joined them, con-

gratulating them on account of the many mercies they had obtained from God.

THE ANGEL DISCLOSES HIMSELF.

After this Tobias related to his parents the benefits which he had received on the journey from his guide, whom he had thought to be a man; wherefore they offered him half of the money which Tobias had brought back.

Then the stranger said to them: "I am the Archangel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the face of God; the Lord sent me to heal thee; it is now time that I should return to Him by whom I have been sent. But you give suitable thanks to God."

Having said this, he was removed out of their sight, nor did he appear again.

HAPPY DEATH OF TOBIT: HIS PROSPERITY.

Tobit, after he had recovered his sight, lived forty-two years, but at the approach of death he called his son, and counselled him always to persevere in the fear of the Lord. Then he slept off in a placid death.

After the death of his father, Tobias the son proceeded to join his father-in-law Raguel, and

served him most dutifully. Lastly, when he had attained the age of ninety-nine, he also departed this life. But all his children and grandchildren, imitating his domestic virtues, were equally grateful to men and favoured by God.

THE STORY OF ESTHER.

MORDECAI, one of the captives of the Assyrians, freed the Jews from a great danger. He had brought up the daughter of his brother, named Esther, who had lost both her father and mother. When she was grown up, the king, Ahasuerus,—successor of Cyrus the Persian, afterwards named Darius Hystaspes—had married her and loved her much. There was at that time a certain courtier and favourite of the king named Haman, who, proud of the king's favour, wished himself to be worshipped, and Mordecai, having refused to do so, had excited a great hatred against himself in the breast of Haman. This wicked man, with the view to avenge himself on his enemy, resolved

to destroy the whole race of the Jews, and obtained an edict to that effect from King Ahasuerus.

**MORDECAI INFORMS ESTHER OF THE GREAT
DANGER OF HER PEOPLE.**

When this cruel edict reached the ears of Mordecai, immediately having rent his garments, he put on sackcloth, and strewing ashes on his head, he went to the palace and filled it with his lamentations.

Esther hearing the voice of his lamentation, inquired what was the cause of it, and when she learned that Mordecai and all the Jews were destined to be put to death, having called on the Lord, she approached the king, to beg him to spare her people. But she did not break the matter at once to the king, only inviting him at first to a banquet.

DISGRACE OF HAMAN : HIS DISGRACEFUL DEATH.

When Ahasuerus came to the banquet with Haman, and was in a very merry mood, Esther cast herself a suppliant at his feet. On seeing this, the king promised that he would not refuse anything to her, even if she asked him for half his kingdom.

Then Esther said to him : " I ask, O king, for the safety of my people, for this cruel man Haman has devoted them to death." Moved by this, and hearing that a cross was prepared for Mordecai, Ahasuerus ordered that Haman should be crucified upon the same cross instead.

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM.

AFTER the Jews returned from their captivity at Babylon, and order had been restored at Jerusalem, they no longer had kings, the supreme authority being given to the priesthood.

They paid tribute at first to the Persians, and afterwards to the Greeks, when Darius had been conquered by Alexander the Great.

Nor did they ever depart from the religion of their fathers, though they were greatly persecuted on that account by many kings, and especially by Antiochus, King of Syria, who brought dreadful sufferings on the people.

Antiochus, King of Syria, attempted to overthrow the law of the Jews. He issued an edict that all, leaving the law and customs of their

fathers, should live according to the rites of the Gentiles. He erected altars to the false gods throughout Judæa; he stripped the temple of Jerusalem of all its ornaments; he ordered the sacred books to be burned; he inflicted unheard-of punishments on those who resisted; he laid waste the capital, Jerusalem, with terrible slaughter; and to prevent the Jews, oppressed by so many evils, from rebelling against him, he placed a garrison in the citadel.

CONSTANCY OF ELEAZAR.

Many of the Jews left their country to avoid the danger; many preferred to suffer death rather than depart from the law of God. An old man, Eleazar, was remarkable for his constancy; for when his mouth was forcibly held open, to oblige him to eat swine flesh—forbidden by the law of Moses—the brave old man spat out the forbidden food, indignant at the outrage. When the king ordered him to be put to death for this, and his friends advised him to eat some different food which they brought to him, pretending to the king that it was pork, and pressed him thus to save his life, Eleazar refused to practise this deception.

HIS DEATH.

He said : " This deception does not suit our age. I will not do anything that shall be a pernicious example to the young. It is far better to perish, than to affix a lasting disgrace on my name, for a brief respite of life. If I follow your counsel, I shall be saved from the punishment of men, but I shall not escape the Divine wrath."

Having said these words, he bravely faced death, and secured eternal glory.

THE MOTHER AND HER SEVEN SONS.

A certain mother, with her seven sons, followed the glorious example of Eleazar. All these wereseized and beaten with rods, that they might be forced to sin, but no violence was able to constrain them to abandon the Divine law. The eldest son proclaimed that he and his brothers were prepared to die rather than commit a fault.

The king, rendered furious, subjected him to varied and exquisite torments.

While suffering these long torments, his mother and the rest of his brothers exhorted one

another to die manfully. Then taking the second son, he inflicted on him similar sufferings. When he was at his last gasp, turning to the king, he said: "Thou, O most wicked man, destroyest us out of this present life; but God, for whose law we shed our blood, will restore what we lose."

After him, the third was tortured in the same way. When he was required, he quickly put forth his tongue, and courageously stretched forth his hands, and said, with confidence: "These I have from heaven, but I despise them now for the sake of God, because I hope to receive them again."

The king and all the spectators were astonished at the young man's courage, because he seemed to esteem his torments as nothing. After his death, the fourth was tormented in the same manner. When he was on the point of death, he said: "To us it is desirable to be given up to death, because immortality is obtained by this death, appointed by the law of God."

When the fifth was being tortured by the executioners, he spoke thus: "Make use of thy power, O king. No doubt thou thinkest that we are quite abandoned by God, and lacking all

help, and, therefore, thou oppressest us with innumerable evils, but thou wilt soon experience the force of the divine power thyself."

The sixth endured the tortures and blows with like constancy, and when almost crushed by them, he said: "Be not deceived, nor glory in our sufferings. We suffer for our sins, but we shall soon return into favour with God, but thou shalt soon pay the heaviest penalty at the hand of God, for thy pride and cruelty."

One only of the seven brothers now survived, whom Antiochus began to entice to desert the law of God, assuring him that he would be rich and happy, but the young man was not moved by his promises. Then the king called on his mother to persuade her son to do what he ordered. But she, smiling at the cruel tyrant, thus addressed her son: "Have pity on me, that have borne thee, and nourished thee, and brought thee up. Do not be degenerate from thy brothers; do not fear this executioner. Fear God only, and look to God, from whom thou receivest thy reward."

The young man, moved by these words, exclaimed: "I do not obey the king, but the law." Then, turning to Antiochus, he con-

tinued, "But thou, O wicked man, thou shalt not escape the wrath of God. The time will come when, stricken and overcome with pain, thou shalt confess that thou art a man. If our people had not sinned against God, they would never have fallen into this misery; but soon God will be reconciled with our people, and we, after enduring death patiently, shall receive the gift of eternal life."

Then Antiochus, exasperated at his being mocked at, raged against this one more even than against his brethren, and killed him with exquisite tortures.

At length he added the slaughter of the mother to that of her seven sons. This admirable woman, deserving of eternal fame, after she had encouraged her struggling sons with her voice and presence, and had viewed their death with wonderful heroism, suffered herself a dreadful death, and mingled her blood with that of her children.

THE MACCABEES.

There was a priest in Jerusalem named Mathathias, with five sons—Judas, Jonathan, Simon, Eleazar, and John. These, having left

the city, that they might not see the evil with which the people were struggling, retired into solitude.

A multitude of men flocked thither, in whose mind was the Divine law, and soon increased, so as to have the appearance of a real army.

Then, having appointed Mathathias leader, they would free their country, and defend their religion with arms. Therefore they overthrew the altars erected here and there to the false gods, and restored the religion of the true God, which had been neglected.

VICTORY OF JUDAS MACCABEUS OVER NICANOR.

Antiochus, when he heard that Apollonius had been beaten, was furiously angry. He gave orders to Lysias to lay waste Judæa and to destroy the whole people.

Lysias sent Nicanor and Gorgias against the Jews, giving them 40,000 foot soldiers and 7000 horsemen; and the Greek leader pitched his camp near the city of Jerusalem.

Judas, whose trust was in God, did not hesitate to encounter him with 3000 men. With this small force he overthrew the royal

army, and took possession of an immense booty.

LYSIAS IS BEATEN BY JUDAS.

When this defeat was announced to Lysias, he thought it had resulted from the fault of the commander, and determined to lead in person an army against Judas. He advanced into Judæa with a force of 65,000 men.

Judas had only 1000 to meet him ; nevertheless he marched against the Greek leader, and having called on God to help him, he engaged the enemy. Five thousand of the army of Lysias fell, and the others were so terrified, that they turned and fled.

JUDAS PURIFIES THE TEMPLE, WHICH HAD BEEN
DEFILED BY THE GENTILES.

After defeating the enemy, Judas gave his attention to restore Divine worship in the land. He entered the city of Jerusalem, crowned with victory, and was appalled at the sight of its devastation. The gates of the temple were burnt, its altars were defiled, and plants were growing in its courts and porticoes, as if it were a forest.

Judas purified everything: he replaced the gates, and erected a new altar, which was dedicated in the presence of a vast multitude, amidst a flourish of trumpets; and a day was set apart for the future to celebrate this auspicious event every year.

EVIDENT MARKS OF THE PROTECTION OF GOD OVER
JUDAS.

The neighbouring nations, excited by the restoration of the Temple, made war upon Judæa. Judas Maccabeus went forth to encounter them, and received clear evidence that God was the helper of Judah in the battle. For in the midst of the engagement five men appeared on horseback, distinguished for their valour, of whom two, keeping Judas between them, cast darts against the enemy, so bewildering their eyes and their mind, that 25,000 of them were slain.

ANTIOCHUS IS STRICKEN BY GOD.

When Antiochus knew that his two generals had been conquered, beside himself with fury, he marched rapidly into Judæa, to take vengeance for these defeats by the destruction of the people and of the city. But he was seized with dread-

ful pain, inflicted on him by the hand of God, and when he persisted in hastening on, he fell heavily from his chariot. This heavy fall increased the disease that was wasting his body, and soon his members were overrun by countless worms, and emitted a smell intolerable to himself and to the whole army.

DEATH OF ANTIOCHUS.

Antiochus, overcome by the severity of his pain, returned at length to a more reasonable state of mind. He admitted that he was mortal, and, remembering the evils with which he had afflicted the Jews, openly confessed that he was suffering punishment for his crimes, and promised that he would make the Jews flourishing and happy.

But all these fine sentiments were only extorted from him by the fear of death, and not by true repentance. This impious and murderous king did not touch the Divine compassion, and his disease increasing every hour, he died at last in dreadful torments.

LYSIAS IS BEATEN AGAIN BY JUDAS MACCABEUS.

Antiochus was succeeded by his son, whose

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name was Eupator ; and who, as he inherited his father's hatred against the Jews, sent against them Lysias again, who had been already beaten by Judas, in order to wash out this stain. Judas had recourse to the Divine assistance, as was his wont, and prayed the Lord that He would send His angel to help His people.

Then, having girt on his armour, he marched with his men to meet the enemy. And now there appeared in front of the Jewish host a horse soldier attired in a white vestment, accoutred with golden armour and brandishing a spear.

The Jews, encouraged by this miracle, rushed like lions on the enemy, and slew 11,000 foot and 1600 horse soldiers of Lysias.

**KING EUPATOR ADVANCES IN PERSON INTO JUDÆA
WITH A FORMIDABLE ARMY.**

King Eupator collected all the forces of his kingdom to crush Judas Maccabeus, and entered Judæa with an army of a hundred thousand foot and twenty thousand horse. They were preceded by elephants, which were terrible from the vast size of their bodies and their tremendous roars. They bare on their backs

wooden towers, filled with armed soldiers hurling destruction on all they encountered.

But Judas, who trusted rather in the help of God than in the number of his soldiers, was not moved by this terrible array of war. He rushed into that part of the enemy's camp where the king's tent was, and, after slaying 4000 men, he scattered all the royal treasure.

**BRAVERY OF ELEAZAR, BROTHER OF JUDAS
MACCABEUS.**

This battle was rendered memorable by the bravery and death of Eleazar. This hero had seen one elephant larger than the others, and adorned with royal trappings. Thinking that it bore the king, he devoted himself to save his countrymen. He hastened through the midst of the enemy to the animal, crept under its belly, killed it with many stabs, and was crushed by the weight of the elephant falling upon him.

IMPIETY OF NICANOR: HIS DEFEAT AND HIS DEATH

When Demetrius Soter occupied the throne of Syria, he sent Nicanor against the Jews. This impious man, stretching forth his right hand in the temple of the Lord, dared to threaten that he would level it to the ground.

Judas and his soldiers, though few in number, engaged him, fighting with their arms but praying to God in their souls. The king's army was almost utterly destroyed. Nicanor himself was found among the slain, and Judas ordered his head to be taken to Jerusalem and his wicked hand to be fixed up in the Temple.

DEATH OF JUDAS MACCABEUS.

Another battle took place soon after with Bacchis, one of the generals of Demetrius, and this battle was fatal to the Jews; for, losing the trust they generally had in God, they lost heart, and fled in different directions.

Judas sustained the attack of the enemy with only eight hundred men; he even broke through the part of the line that was opposed to him; but, surrounded by a multitude of enemies, he was pierced by their weapons. The grief exhibited at his death showed how dear he was to the Jewish people; long was he lamented and mourned by his countrymen.

JONATHAN SUCCEEDS JUDAS MACCABEUS: HIS

DEATH.

Jonathan was chosen in the place of Judas, and, emulating the virtues of his noble brother,

he defeated Bacchis in several battles, and obliged him to sue for peace. Meanwhile Alexander Bala, a rival of Demetrius, killed that king, formed a treaty with Jonathan, presented him with a purple vest, and adhered faithfully to the terms of the treaty. Thus as long as Alexander occupied the throne, the Jews enjoyed a period of tranquillity, but soon after Jonathan was killed by the treachery of a certain Tripho (a pretended son of Alexander Bala).

SIMON SUCCEEDS JONATHAN : HIS DEATH : HIS
SUCCESSOR.

The principal authority was now delegated to Simon, brother of Jonathan. He performed magnificent funeral rites in honour of his brother, but did not reign long himself, for he also perished by the treachery of his son-in-law.

John, named Hyrcanus, succeeded his father, and left a son named Aristobulus, who was the first, after the Babylonish captivity, to assume the appellation of king.

**A PICTURE OF SIDI IBRAHIM, OR, OF THE
LORD ABRAHAM.**

HOME LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS.

EMERGING from low limestone hills, which, broken into a thousand wooded valleys, form a barrier between the Tigris and the plains of Mesopotamia, the wanderer encounters the desert, or rather wilderness. At certain seasons nowhere is a more varied scene or richer vegetation to be witnessed. As he goes forth on his wanderings westward, guided by the words of the Lord, Ibrahim with his followers treads on an interminable carpet, figured by flowers of every hue; nor is there a lack of water, for at particular seasons abundant rains give reservoirs in every hollow and to every ravine. Owing to the character of the soil, the contents of the reservoirs is blackish, but not unwholesome. Clusters of black tents may be detected scattered about, while flocks of sheep and camels wander across the plain. Some of Ibrahim's party, who are well mounted, urge their horses through the meadows, in pursuit of herds of gazelles or the wild boar lying hid in the long grass. The air of

the desert is so exhilarating in spring, and the sense of freedom derived from the sight of the boundless expanse so great, that they must be felt by an occupant of cities and of Europe to be understood. It is a kind of intoxication still felt by the Arabs, the descendants of Ishmael.

As the sun goes down behind the low hills that separate the river from the desert, its departing rays are gradually withdrawn, like a transparent veil of light. The glow of the last light is over the pure, unclouded sky. Afar off a solitary chain stands out—the Carduchian or Kurdish mountains; their shining snow-tops, still tipped by the dying sunbeams, struggle with the twilight. The lowing of cattle and bleating of sheep are at first faintly heard, these become louder as the flocks return from their pastures and wander among the tents.

Girls hurry across the green sward to seek their father's cattle, or, crouching down, milk those that have come back to their folds. Some appear coming from the river, carrying full pitchers on their heads or shoulders; others again, not less graceful in their forms, and erect in carriage, are carrying heavy loads of grass, cut in the meadows at hand. Occasionally a

party of horsemen is seen to ride at a distance over the plain, the tufts of ostrich feathers which top their long spears shining against the evening sky. Some of these parties, riding up to the tent of the Patriarch, give the usual salutation : " Peace be to you, Sheik " (my lord); or, " Allah Aienak " (God help you).

Thereupon driving the end of their lances into the ground, they are seen to jump down from their mares, and attach their halters to the weapons. Lastly, sitting down on the grass, they talk about deeds of war and rapine, till the moon rising, they vault into the saddle and proceed on the way to the desert.

THE MARCH.

The plain appears to swarm with moving objects. We are amid wide-spreading flocks of sheep and camels. Far as the eye extends, to the right, to the left, and in front, the same moving scene is presented to view. Long files of asses and camels laden with black tents, immense cauldrons and many-coloured carpets; old men and women unable to walk, fastened to the top of household furniture; infants crammed into saddle-bags balanced on the backs of

animals by kids or lambs tied on the opposite side ; mothers with children on their shoulders, boys driving flocks of lambs ; horsemen, armed with long tufted spears, flying over the plain on their swift mares ; riders urging on their dromedaries with short hooked sticks ; colts galloping amidst the crowd ; the ladies of the chiefs seated in the centre of huge wings, consisting of large poles with network, extending like a butterfly on each side of the camel's hump. . . . Such is the motley escort attending the steps of the Patriarch as he wends his way westward.

HALT IN THE DESERT.

The tents were pitched on a broad lawn in a dark ravine ; they were dispersed on every side, and consisted of an immense sheet of black goat's hair canvas, supported by twelve or fourteen stout poles, and completely open on one side. Between the centre poles are placed upright, and closely adjacent, large sacks, also of goat's hair, filled with corn, rice, barley, and other household matters. On these carpets and cushions were spread, on which Sarah reposed, surrounded by fifty handmaidens tending the

cauldrons, baking bread over the ashes, or shaking skins suspended between the stakes, and filled with milk, thus to be churned into butter. When guests appeared, Ibrahim advanced to receive them, followed by about 300 of his people. His eye was bright and intelligent, his features regular, well-formed, and expressive. His dress only differed from that of his followers in quality and material. A thick handkerchief, striped yellow, red, and blue, and fringed with long plaited cords, was thrown over his head and fell down his shoulders. It was kept in place over the brow by a band of spun camel's hair, tied at intervals by silken threads of various colours. A long white shirt coming down to his ankles, and a cloak of black and white stuff, completed his costume.

Sarah wore an attire laying more claim to ornament. She was tall of stature and fair in complexion; her features were regular, and she had large, dark, and brilliant eyes. Hanging from each ear, and depending far towards her waist, was a large gold earring, ending in a tablet, also of gold, and adorned with fine turquoises (precious stones of a blue colour). Ponderous rows of strung beads, Assyrian

cylinders, fragments of coral, agates, and variegated stones were suspended from her neck. Silver rings encircled her wrists and ankles, making a considerable jingle as she moved about. When she issued forth, she wore over her blue skirt a warm striped cloak, and a common black kerchief was bound loosely round her brow by a rope of twisted camel's hair.

Issuing to meet his guests, who on one occasion were three angels, the Patriarch Abraham leads them to the top of the tent, where they seat themselves on carpets. When all have found places, words of welcome are repeated. "Peace be with you, O Sheik" (O chief!). "Upon my head you are welcome; my house is your house," exclaims Sidi Ibrahim. "Peace be with you, Sidi Ibrahim," say the strangers; "may God protect you." The meal is then brought in—large wooden bowls and platters filled with boiled fragments of mutton, swimming in melted butter and sour milk.

OUTLINE OF THE GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE.

GEOGRAPHICALLY, Palestine is a dependency of Syria. The mountains that traverse the latter region divide into two chains. One of these chains, that of Lebanon, faces the Mediterranean, from which it never recedes more than twenty or twenty-five miles; while the other chain, that of Anti-Lebanon, flanks the eastern side of the valley of Coele Syria, and its eastern slopes descend into the plains of Damascus, and are terminated to the south by the lofty summits of Great Hermon, forming the northern limit of Palestine. Several summits of Lebanon rise above 3500 yards, thus attaining the limits of perpetual snow. Accordingly an Arabian poet has said of this mountain that it has winter on its head, autumn on its shoulders, spring on its knee, and summer at its feet. Numerous streams of water descend from its western slope, and bring forth a luxurious vegetation.

Lebanon covers this western region of Asia with numerous branches, which group into separate mountains, or which lengthen out in long chains, of which one traverses the centre

of Judæa under the name of Mounts Ephraim and Judah, and the other, known as Mount Carmel, sends out a northern spur far into the sea, having an elevation of about 550 yards.

Mount Carmel, clothed with vines, olives, and rich pastures, is noted for its thousand cascades, its beautiful and picturesque scenery, and its numerous grottoes and caverns, which nature and art have dug out in its sides. There are several isolated or separated groups, especially Mount Tabor (Djebel Tour), which issue like a great bouquet or nosegay of verdure from the plain of Esdraelon, and from whose summit (600 yards high) a view is obtained extending to the Mediterranean and the valley of the Jordan. Another group is that of Mount Gilboa, where Saul slew himself; then we have Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, separated by the little valley of the vision, the first dwelling of Abraham in the land of Canaan. Other groups are those of Shiloh, where the ark longrested; Golgotha, or Calvary; the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem; the mountain of Idon or Mount Moriah, on which the temple was built, &c.

From the Anti-Lebanon, or rather the Great Hermon, descends a branch named the Moun-

tains of Gilead, which flank the Jordan on its left side, and of which the northern part bore the name of Mountains of Bashan. Succeeding these, to the east of the Dead Sea, we come to Mounts Abarim, to which group belongs Nebo or Pisgah, where Moses died, and Phogar, where Balaam blessed Israel. These two summits rise not far from the place where the Jordan falls into the Dead Sea. To the west and south-west of this great lake occur other groups: the Mountains of Judah, or of the Amorites, a prolongation of the Mountains of Ephraim, and remarkable for the great number of natural grottoes they contain, many of which served as a refuge to David when he fled from Saul.

At the foot of these mountains stretch away several plains, arid or fertile, according to their situation east or west of Mount Ephraim, north or south of Palestine. The Plain of Sharon, which extends, facing the sea, from Joppa to Carmel, is renowned for the elegant decoration of verdure and flowers in spring, when the air is perfumed with the odour of white and red roses, of the narcissus, of the anemone, of white and yellow lilies, and other sweet-smelling plants.

The plains of Zebulun, of Jezreel, of Nazareth, and of Sepphoris, are as graceful as they are fertile, and are remarkable for hills almost precipitous, but flat at the top, and answering the purpose of citadels. But in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea the plains are only frightful solitudes, such as the Desert of Judæa, to the east of Hebron.

Near Jerusalem were the Valleys of Ephraim, of Jehoshaphat, and of the sons of Hinnom.

THE JORDAN AND THE DEAD SEA.

Palestine has only one river, the Jordan (Scheira-el-Kebir), formed by the streams descending from Mount Hermon. One of its three sources is in a grotto near Banias. After forming a small lake, called the Waters of Merom, seven miles long and about three wide, the Jordan pours into Lake Gennesareth, also named the Sea of Galilee and Lake Tiberias, eighteen miles long and about five in width.

From this point the Jordan flows along the beautiful Valley of Aulon as far as the Dead Sea, into which it empties itself. Its course is at the most one hundred and twenty miles, its width

thirty yards, its depth in summer about twelve feet. Its only tributaries are torrents from the neighbouring mountains; the Hieromax and the Jabbok, on the left, and the Tappuah on the right bank.

Into the Mediterranean fall the Belus (on whose banks Phœnicians discovered glass), the Kishon, the Kanah, the Sorek, or Biser, and the torrent of Egypt; into the Dead Sea fall the Arnon, the Kedron, and the Zered.

The Dead Sea, which has a length of about fifty-eight miles and a width of sixteen, is at a much lower level than the Mediterranean. It has been found that while the Lake of Gennessareth is about one hundred and twenty yards, the Dead Sea is about one hundred and forty yards below the surface of the Mediterranean. The Dead Sea, called by the Arabs the Sea of Lot (Bahar el Loot), fills the bottom of a deep trough dug out by the waters of the Jordan, after the great convulsion that cut off the river from the Red Sea.

The waters of the Dead Sea, saturated with salt, also hold in solution a quantity of sulphate of lime, of magnesia, and of soda, equal to a quarter of their weight. The weight of the

water of the Dead Sea is one thousand two hundred, while that of fresh water is one thousand ; therefore the Dead Sea water exceeds the weight of sea water by 0.2. Therefore the winds cannot stir up those thick, heavy waters, and the silence of death prevails on those banks never washed by any joyous waves.

From a distance the waters appear of a pale green, but near at hand their tint becomes bluish, and when taken in the hollow of the hand they have the colour of oil. Fifty yards before the Jordan falls into the lake, it acquires a bitter taste. The asphalt or bitumen rises sometimes from the bottom of the lake, floats on its surface, and is collected on its banks.

According to the testimony of most travellers neither fish nor shell-fish (molluscs) live in the lake. An unhealthy vapour rises from it. Sometimes only a few stunted trees are seen on its banks, which are frightfully sterile, and are never enlivened by the songs of birds. It appears that the basin of the Dead Sea was formerly a fertile valley, partly suspended over a collection of subterranean waters, and partly composed of beds of bitumen. Fire from heaven kindled

these combustible materials, and the fertile lands sank into the abyss beneath.

The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and others, possibly built of bituminous stone, became likewise the prey of this vast conflagration. Physical geography tries to explain in this manner the revolutions of which this country has been the theatre, according to Moses.

STERILITY OF THE SOUTHERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN REGION.

Travellers have given contradictory accounts of the fertility of Palestine. All are right, but the writers who only saw a part of the country, were wrong to extend their remarks to the whole.

If you arrive at Jaffa, the high road of most pilgrims, nothing is seen but desolation and sadness. "Approaching the centre of Judæa, the sides of the mountains spread out and take a grander but a more sterile look; by degrees vegetation retires and dies out, even the rosy mosses vanish. A reddish and fiery tint replaces the usual pale colour of the rocks. In the middle of the mountains is an arid basin shut in on all sides by yellow and rocky summits. These summits only open to the east to

give a glimpse of the Dead Sea and the far-off mountains of Arabia." In the midst of this strange landscape, on a broken and sloping ground enclosed by a wall, vast ruins are discerned, scattered cypress trees, bushes of aloes and nepals, a few Arab huts, like whited sepulchres, top this mass of ruins,—such is the mournful Jerusalem.

The general aspect of the country round Jerusalem can be given in a few words. Mountains lacking all shade, valleys without water, earth without verdure, rocks without grandeur. A few blocks of grey stone piercing through the friable and parched cracked soil; here and there a fig-tree; near it a gazelle or a jackal prowling among the fragments of the rocks. To these features may be added a few vines creeping over the grey or reddish ashes. A tuft of pale olive trees throwing a feeble shadow on the steep slope of the hills on the horizon, a terebinth or a black carob tree stand out sad and solitary against the blue of the sky; the walls and grey towers of the city appear afar off on the crest of Zion. Such is the land. Above is the sublime, pure, clear, deep sky, never showing the vestige of a cloud, or darkening into purple at morning

and evening. On the side of Arabia a large chasm descends among black mountains, and carries on the eye to the shining waters of the Dead Sea, while on the horizon appear the purple summits of the mountains of Moab.

FERTILITY OF GALILEE.

But Palestine is not only a rocky region, like the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. If a visit is made to Galilee—that is, the northern part of the land of Canaan—the country answers to the idea of the Promised Land. Between Carmel and Lebanon the road leads to the plains of the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar, where beauty of scenery and a prodigious fertility of soil are united.

After Nazareth, a walk of two hours brings the traveller to a series of little valleys, winding gracefully between hills covered by fine forests of evergreen oak. These forests separate the plain Kaipha from the country of Nazareth, and from the desert of Mount Tabor. Mount Carmel, a lofty chain of mountains branching off from the course of the Jordan, and ending abruptly at the sea, begins to appear on the traveller's left. Its line, of a dark green colour, stands out

against the dark blue sky, covered with waves of mist—like smoke issuing from volcanoes. Its sides are clothed with a vigorous vegetation. Everywhere appears a mass of thick shrubs, crowned here and there by the lofty summits of the oaks. Grey rocks, cut by nature into strange and colossal shapes, pierce here and there through this verdure, and reflect the dazzling rays of the sun.

Such is the view presented to the traveller on his left, while at his feet the valleys that he follows descend in gentle slopes, and begin to open into the beautiful plain of Kaipha. Climbing the last hillocks that separate him from the plain, the traveller loses sight of it for a moment and soon sees it again. These hillocks between Palestine and the sea-coast of Syria are one of the most agreeable, and, at the same time, the most solemn scenes presented in any country.

Here and there the forests of oaks, left in a state of nature, form large openings covered by a velvety turf as in our western meadows. In the background, the summit of Tabor rises like a sublime altar crowned by green garlands in a sky of fire; further still, the blue summits of the mountains of Gilboa and Samaria shimmer

indistinctly on the horizon. Mount Carmel spreads its dark curtains with large folds on one side of the scene, and the eye, following it, soon arrives at the sea, which finishes the picture as the sky in fine landscapes.

The soil, consisting of a sandy earth, rises from Jaffa towards the mountains of Judæa, forming four terraces. The sea-shore is crowned by lentisks, palm-trees, and nopals; higher up occur vines, olives, and sycamores, bearing witness to the care of gardeners; the natural vegetation consists of evergreen oaks, cypress-trees, and terebinths, while the ground is covered by rosmarins, cistuses, and tuberculous plants.

Some travellers tell us how they have dined under the shade of citron-trees as large as our largest oaks, or of sycamores that overshadowed thirty persons, with their horses. The wine of St. John, near Bethlehem, is delicious. The wild olives, near Jericho, offer very large fruit and a very fine oil. In the irrigated parts, the same field, after yielding a crop of corn in the month of May, produces vegetables in the autumn. Several kinds of fruit-trees are continually loaded, at the same

time, with blossoms and with fruit. The mulberry-trees planted in rows in the country are interlaced with the branches of the vine.

If, during the heats, this vegetation seems to languish, and even to perish, and though at all seasons it is very scattered in the mountain districts, this is not only the natural effect of all dry and hot countries, but results also from the barbarous condition of the inhabitants.

The remains of walls may still be detected by which the ancient inhabitants supported the earth, the ruins of cisterns, in which they collected the rain-water, and the traces of canals, by which these waters were distributed throughout the country. What a wonderful fertility must have been produced by these canals—and all this care under a burning sun, when all that is needed is a supply of water to give life to the germs of vegetation.

The descriptions of the ancients, bearing on the fertility of Judæa, are by no means contradictory to the present sterility of the country. Moses could say that the land of Canaan flowed with milk and honey. The Arab flocks still find there rich pasture, and the wild bees collect in the hollow of the rocks a sweet-smelling honey.

On the other hand, the ancients, and especially the Hebrews, did not overlook the sterility of the central chain of Judæa and of the deserts that extend to the east of these mountains towards the Dead Sea. Ancient and modern travellers have found nothing there except stones, sand, ashes, and some thorny bushes.

This contrast between the two slopes of the chain of Judæa is very remarkable.

Part II.

The Animal Creation.

READING LESSON.

BEFORE God created man He had filled the seas and the air with living creatures.

Let us try to imagine the utter silence that must have reigned over the newly-created earth before the sounds of life were heard. The wide expanse of water, the boundless atmosphere, the vast and tangled forests, all voiceless—no joy, no sorrow! though the elements may already have begun their strife, and the roar of the tides, the wail of the winds, the forked lightning and the pealing thunder have first awakened the dormant echoes.

When the voice of birds and the varied hum of life burst forth, it was the first anthem of praise to the Creator of life, and since then these songs have never ceased to rise in tones either plaintive or gay, yet always in grateful intent to the Almighty Father.

In those early ages, the first days of creation, before mankind had occupied the earth, many huge animals, birds, and reptiles existed that have since disappeared, such as great lizards, and mammoths larger than elephants, and birds twelve feet high. We have no written records of these earliest inhabitants of our globe, but their bones and skeletons tell us that they were once full of life and strength, feeding upon the luxuriant herbage and foliage of the primeval world, and it was the decay of this exuberance of vegetation that helped during the course of ages to cover the surface of the earth with layers of rich mould—the granary thus prepared for future generations of men.

Inferior as the brute creation is to the human species, yet if we consider with attention the bodies of different animals we see they possess many advantages over man. Some of them have bodies stronger and more compact than that of the human being, and most of them are able to use their limbs at their first entrance into the world, to seek for their food, and to follow the instinct imparted to them by nature.

They suffer less, and are less liable to sickness than man during his infancy. With what skill

and address they use their senses without the effort and length of time required by the young of our own species to attain to a similar state of perfection. How acute also is their sense of smell, how piercing their sight, how active are their movements, whether it be the bird upon the wing or the fleet-footed deer or hound. If we consider the wonderful structure of their organs, the noble and majestic appearance of some of the higher animals, we shall find that in bodily perfection they surpass some of the lower types of the human species. But if God has not given us the wings of the eagle, the strength and speed of the courser, the eye of the hawk, or the agility of the stag, we must ever bear in mind that man possesses a soul, which enables him to soar far above these animals, and to make all their powers serve his convenience and comfort.

READING LESSON.

THE HORSE.

As the friend and servant of man, no animal can be placed above the horse, either with regard to its utility or its intelligence. How nobly it

carries its arching neck and beautiful head ; how rapidly, how gracefully, it moves ; and, again, with what devotion it strains every nerve and muscle in our service. It never takes the life of any other animal for its food, for it feeds on grass, hay, and corn, thus made neither to destroy nor to harm. It is a type of all the gentler and nobler qualities.

It is said that the horse has been the means of relieving man from the necessity of being himself a beast of burden, by doing for him the most menial and exhausting kinds of drudgery. The horse draws the plough, and carries all we want. It submits to the lash even when we require of it undue exertion of strength, and how often does it die when thus in the very act of serving us. In the battle-field it almost equals its master in its defiance of danger, and in hunting it bounds along as if it shared with its rider the pleasure and excitement of the chase. With what readiness it obeys every touch of the whip or reins, and a docile, well-trained horse has no will of its own ; a caress of the hand or the sound of its master's voice suffice ; it needs neither whip nor spur to fly like the wind, as long as it has power to move. With all this devotion what

does it ask in return? A moderate and frugal supply of food, a drink of water, a little straw upon which to repose its weary limbs, and, above all, a caress and a kind word.

In some parts of the world, as in the great plains of Asia and of America, the horse runs in wild freedom; but the true home of the horse is the great central table-land of Asia or Tartary and the east and south of Africa. The horses which roam wild across the pampas and prairies of America, in herds of many thousands, are the descendants of Spanish horses brought over there soon after the discovery of the New World by Christopher Columbus.

When a Mexican or an Indian wishes to catch one of the wild horses, in order to break it in for use, he approaches the herd mounted on a swift horse, and having fixed upon the animal he intends to secure, he throws the lasso, a long plaited thong made of buffalo hide, terminating in a running knot. The rider then sets off full gallop, and the horse, feeling himself caught by the neck, is obliged to follow, in order to escape being strangled by the noose. A saddle and bridle are soon after put upon the wild horse, and in a few days it is sufficiently submissive to

be mounted by its Creole or Indian master, who is amongst the best riders in the world.

When the herds of wild horses perceive any of their trained brethren, they run towards them, neighing in a peculiar manner, as if to invite them to join their herd, and often travellers have been stopped on their journey through the desertion of their horses.

The Arab horse is noted above all others for its high qualities, its swiftness, its intelligence, and fidelity. The Arab brings up the young foal in his own tent with his own children, and the animal is so gentle that it never hurts them, although the little children sleep upon its neck and body.

When we think that gentle treatment can render the horse so companionable and intelligent, it is not only inhuman but short-sighted to ill-use it. In Sweden the whip is forbidden, yet the horse does his work no less intelligently and readily. Cruel usage renders the horse either timid or vicious. Many are the stories told which testify to the high qualities of the horse, such as the following anecdotes, which are perfectly true. A carter was one day driving a cart, heavily laden with sand, down a hill. The man

made a false step and fell in front of the wheel of his cart. The horse, unable to stop short, turned sharply aside with a presence of mind that seems beyond belief, and thus stopped the loaded vehicle. The carter sprung to his feet, and throwing his arm over the neck of the horse, called it his friend, his deliverer, his brother; adding, "Never again will I touch with the whip so noble a creature." And he kept his word.

Again, it is told that a boy had ridden a horse to the river to let it drink, but not content to keep safely on the bank, the boy kicked and struck the poor animal until it entered the water, and the current being rapid, it soon lost its footing, and had to struggle hard whilst swimming not to be carried away. The thoughtless boy in the meanwhile could not keep his seat, and was on the point of being swept away and drowned, when the horse, more intelligent and brave than its tormentor, seized the blouse of the boy in his teeth, and quickly landed with him on the opposite bank of the stream.

The horse is also capable of acts of revenge, which shows that it possesses memory, and, not unfrequently, it resents its ill-usage by being in its turn vicious and untractable. If the

horse had the gift of speech, would it not say,—“Is it not your fault that I am unruly? I am ready to serve and to love you, but you overtax my strength, and then cruelly ill-use me because I can do no more.”

It is time that we should bear in mind that we offend God when we ill-use His creatures, and that He did not give man power over the brute creation to act as a brute himself, and we may be sure that the man who is cruel to his horse will be selfish and cruel to his own kind, for God has not given him two hearts. Let us, therefore, in our childhood learn that pity is due to everything capable of feeling and of suffering.

READING LESSON.

THE ASS.

THE ass is naturally as patient and humble as the horse is proud and impetuous: it suffers blows and ill-usage with fortitude; it is content to eat thistles and plants disdained by other animals, but it will only drink water from the clearest running brooks, and with such

sobriety, that it does not plunge its nose beneath the surface, fearing, it is said, the shadow of its long ears. The ass dislikes to wet its feet, and will turn aside to avoid soiling its legs with mud.

The primitive race exists in Tartary, India, Egypt, and a part of Persia, where it carries the head high, has a light step, and looks as bright and intelligent as here it appears sad and resigned. This animal was transported by the Spaniards to Peru, as the horse was taken to Mexico, and they now exist there in a wild state in vast numbers, and are very hard to tame, but when broken in they become most useful servants. Across the high passages of the Andes and the Cordilleras they carry, not only people, but heavy burdens. When going down very steep precipices they spread out their front feet, and drawing their hind legs under their body, slide down on their haunches at a rapid pace, and, in this position, they follow the windings of the descent with wonderful skill.

In Egypt they are ridden by all classes, high officers alone excepted. In that warm climate they grow tall and robust, yet are very gentle;

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their pace is a kind of amble, and they are very sure-footed.

Of all animals, none has more claim upon us than the ass, for did not Christ enter Jerusalem mounted upon one of these gentle, yet intelligent creatures? Children should recal this to mind when they see them tormented, as they too frequently are in our own land, especially by the young and thoughtless. By good usage all the better qualities of the ass would be brought out, and by exercising mercy, man himself is raised to a higher level, for Providence has ordered that mercy "is twice blessed: it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." We pray for mercy, and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy.

READING LESSON.

THE OX.

OF all the animals domesticated by man, the most necessary are the ox and the horse. In some countries the ox is used for draught as much as the horse: its flesh affords the most

nourishing food, and the milk of cows, with the butter and cheese it produces, is, with the addition of some kind of cereal, all that is needed to support life. In the first primitive ages of society, flocks and herds formed the chief riches of the rulers and patriarchs, and the sons and daughters of kings and princes did not disdain to tend and guard the flocks and herds of their fathers.

We read in the Old Testament that Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Abraham was very rich in cattle; Lot also had many flocks and herds. Jacob first met Rachel at the well of Haran, where she came with her father's sheep, for she kept them. And when serving her father Laban, in Padan-aram, Jacob became possessed of much wealth in oxen and asses, flocks of sheep and goats and camels. With these he returned to Isaac, his father; but he and his brother Esau could not dwell together in Canaan, "for their riches were more than that they might dwell together, and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle."

Joseph, Jacob's younger son, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flocks with his

brethren ; and after he had been sold by them to the Ishmaelite traders who came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, he was carried by them down to Egypt. In time Joseph became a great man, and prospered in Pharaoh's household ; and Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt, because that the famine was so sore in all lands, and in the end Jacob and all his family, with their cattle and their goods, left Canaan and came into Egypt, and Joseph made ready his chariot, and went to meet Israel his father to Goshen. And Joseph said to Pharaoh, "My father and my brethren, and their flocks and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan, and behold they are in the land of Goshen." Then Pharaoh said to the brethren, "What is your occupation?" and they said unto Pharaoh, "Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our father." And Pharaoh gave them the best of the land to dwell in, in the land of Goshen, and made them rulers over his cattle. But when Jacob and Joseph were both gathered to their fathers, and the Israelites had multiplied exceedingly, there arose a new king over Egypt who knew not Joseph,

and all the great things he had done during the years of famine which had swept over all the land. The Egyptians began to fear the children of Israel, saying, "Behold, they are more and mightier than we." Therefore they did set taskmasters over them to afflict them with their burdens, and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage. And thus we are led to the wonderful miracles wrought by God through Moses to free His people, and then to the exodus, and the wanderings in the wilderness, where God gives the Commandments to Moses; and as the Tabernacle was there made of very precious things, we can judge from all that was done to furnish it with curious works in gold, in silver, and in brass, in the cutting of stones, in the carving of wood, and in all manner of work of the engraver, of the embroiderer in blue, in purple, in scarlet, and of the weaver in fine linen, that the Israelites were no longer the simple shepherds they had been when they first followed Joseph into Egypt, but had become cunning in handicraft and in the knowledge of many things. They were henceforth to be a great people, worshipping *one* God, Jehovah, governed by Divine laws; and

their history, which we read and know as the Old and New Testaments, is inspired, from the beginning to the end, by the teachings of prophecy, and is for Divine guidance in all ages.

READING LESSON.

THE SHEEP.

THIS most useful creature is gentle and harmless, and must have been the first animal domesticated by man, for Abel was a keeper of sheep; and of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof, he made an offering unto the Lord; while with Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground, we gain our first knowledge of the sons of Adam and Eve, and of their pursuits after the loss of Paradise.

It is instructive to remark that the *very same* kinds of domesticated animals which we now possess, so many thousands of years from that early period, were those first domesticated by the immediate descendants of our first parents. That God had placed these primary necessities within the radius of the earliest

settlements of mankind for their support and nourishment, we cannot doubt, as we can trace the same fatherly care even down to the smallest insect, who instinctively lays its eggs upon the leaves of those plants which are to form the food for its future progeny, when yet unable to seek it for itself.

There are now many varieties of sheep, and they can live in most parts of the world. Their flesh is excellent and nourishing. A perfectly white butter can be made from the milk of the ewes; but the chief value of the sheep, whilst still alive, is their fleece. This is cut off yearly in summer, and the greater part of our warm clothing and coverings is spun from the wool of the sheep. A fleece will weigh from six to eight pounds. Of the fat of the sheep we make candles, and of its skin, parchment. Never has man been without this useful and gentle creature, and, on account of these qualities, it has been singled out by Christ as a type of goodness and of innocence. Whilst the Son of man Himself is our Good Shepherd, and we are His sheep, He is also the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.

READING LESSON.**THE GOAT.**

THE goat must have been one of the earliest of domesticated animals. In organization it is like the sheep ; but the goat is as lively and rebellious as the other is gentle and quiet.

The goat loves to climb freely amidst the highest mountains, and it can walk in safety along the edge of an abyss such as it would be impossible for man to pass. The goat is not dainty ; it eats grass, leaves, and the bark of trees ; it is intelligent, and is said to like music ; it loves its young more markedly than the sheep ; it is also more capable of attachment to those who are kind to it. Its milk is nourishing and lighter than that of the cow, therefore it is frequently given to young children, to whom the goat becomes very devoted, following the nurse who carries the infant, and bleating after it as if the child were one of its own little ones.

We can take up no subject with an earnest mind without finding unending interest and food for pious thoughts. Happy, indeed, is the child

who learns early to take interest in God's works, for there is no pursuit more desirable than to fix our thoughts upon God and the effects of His wisdom : it renders our minds noble and pure, advances the dignity of our nature, and makes all that is low and evil truly hateful and impossible.

READING LESSON.

THE CAMEL.

THE camel is first mentioned early in Scripture. The servant of Abraham took with him ten camels when he went into Mesopotamia to fetch Rebecca ; and Rebecca and her damsels rode upon the camels. Travellers at the present day still cross the plains and deserts of Syria and Arabia in the same primitive way ; and the reason is that the camel is at home there, amongst those dry and arid sands, where, for days together, not a drop of water, or of dew, is met with to quench the thirst.

The camel with two humps inhabits Asia, whilst the dromedary, having one hump, is confined to Africa. They are provided by Providence with the means of retaining a large

quantity of water in cells within their stomach. Without this peculiarity many countries bordering on those vast districts of sand would be uninhabited. These animals are named "ships of the desert," and serve to traverse those great oceans of sand, as ships cross the seas. They are, indeed, a providential gift, and our wonder increases the more we bring ourselves to notice the care which the Almighty Father has for His creatures. He has foreseen all their needs, and provided against them in so many ways, that we must close our eyes and our hearts, not to acknowledge His handiwork.

A well-trained camel can travel a hundred and fifty miles in a single day. It can live eight days without food or water, and yet travel over some hundreds of miles, carrying heavy weights. The dromedary carries less than the camel with two humps, being smaller in size, and of less strength. The camel eats the dried herbs he finds in the desert, with the addition of a little barley, a few beans, and flour made into paste with water. When it approaches a river, or a well of water, which it is able to perceive from a long distance, it

hastens its step, and drinks an enormous quantity, both to quench its thirst and to lay by a store for the future.

After a long and fatiguing day's march, when with its head bent down it advances slowly and painfully, its driver will strike up a lively song, and at once the camel lifts its head and long neck,—hunger, thirst, fatigue, are all forgotten, and if the singer quickens the measure, all the camels hasten to keep in time, thus passing from a slow to a quick march.

Though naturally gentle, the camel resents ill-usage. When in fury against its driver, the Arab throws together his clothes in a heap, so as to appear that he is under them: the camel sees the clothes, seizes them with his teeth, shakes them violently, and stamps upon them in his rage. When his anger is calmed down, he leaves them, and the owner of the vestments can then show himself again with safety.

From the camel we should learn this lesson, that it is unworthy of the human being to give way to anger, for God has given him reason to exert self-command. At the same time we should do well to imitate the poor camel in

no longer cherishing resentment when the moment of anger is over.

READING LESSON.

THE ELEPHANT.

THIS huge creature may be surnamed the king of animals, for it possesses not only strength and courage, but an amount of intelligence that raises it above most other animals. It fears none of their attacks, and triumphs even over the ferocious tiger. Its two long tusks, which furnish the ivory of commerce, are used by the animal not only as a defence, but as a means of grubbing up the roots on which it feeds. Its long trunk is a continuation of its nose, which is so pliant, that the elephant can move it in every possible way: with it, it picks herbs and flowers, choosing them one by one to eat; it can pick up with it the smallest pieces of money, can undo a knot, or shut a door, turn the key, and fasten or unfasten the bolts. In a domestic state the elephant eats hay, oats, barley, bread, and fruit. It drinks large quantities of water, sucking it up into its trunk, and from thence pouring it into its mouth. By this means it once revenged itself

upon a little boy, who, whilst offering the elephant a bit of bread, slyly pricked its trunk, which is very sensitive, with a pin. The animal for a few seconds walked away, but soon came back and covered the mischievous boy with a deluge of water.

A curious scene was once witnessed by some visitors to the Zoological Gardens. A mouse had ventured to pick up some of the stray crumbs scattered about near the elephant's house, but being frightened by a sudden approach of the great proboscis of the elephant, in search also of the bits of bread and cake thrown towards it, and, seeing no other corner to hide in, ran up the nostril of the trunk, to the great surprise of the elephant, who began to whirl it round and round its head. Being unable to thus get rid of the imprudent mouse, the elephant sat down to think what was to be done. After a few moments of reflection, the creature approached its drinking-trough, and after well filling its trunk, sent out all the water with great force, dislodging at the same time the little mouse, half drowned. It fell near one of the huge feet of the elephant. This he slowly raised, and quietly crushed the poor little animal as we should a fly.

Nearly all the transport of goods in India is done by elephants: bales, sacks, barrels, are piled not only on their back, but on their neck and tusks, the elephant himself holding the rope in his mouth which straps them together. The goods thus confided to him are rarely injured, for the creature has as much intelligence as strength. When it has to unload, it takes each package in its trunk, and carefully places it on the ground in a neat and compact manner: if a barrel rolls out of its place, the elephant will fetch a stone, and thus secure it.

It is also as faithful to its trust as the most trusty servant could be. A native of India, having to go to a bazaar to make purchases, left his child under the care of his elephant, which was tied to a stake. Some English officers, wishing to test the fidelity of the animal, offered it fruit and cakes, in order to take off its attention from the child. The animal cast a longing look towards the fruit, but did not move. They then tried by means of a long bamboo with a running noose to carry off the object of its solicitude. The elephant at once became violently angry, and the noble animal, looking at the officers as if it would rebuke them for their folly,

stood on guard over the child, until the return of the father, when, raising the infant up gently with its trunk, placed it in his arms. After this it seemed pacified and quiet; it received with pleasure the fruit it had before refused, upon which it regaled itself with evident satisfaction.

We may again learn a lesson from an inferior, and it would be well if man were always as faithful, trusty, and gentle, as the elephant can show itself to be. Above all, let us remember that these qualities must be directly infused by the Creator into the mind and heart of the elephant, to whom no training could give such sentiments, and who, without the aids that we have, or anything but its own instincts, appears to act at times with as great a sense of duty as his lord and master, man.

READING LESSON.

THE DOG.

THE dog ranks with the horse as the friend of man, but the dog *alone* seeks the society of man in preference to that of its own kind. The

fidelity of the dog is proverbial, and though its master may be so poor that he has not shelter and hardly food to share with his dog, the faithful beast would not forsake him for the most comfortable quarters amongst strangers. The heart must be hard that could ill-treat one of these intelligent and affectionate creatures, who would not hesitate to risk life for those it loves. Dogs have been known to die of grief at the loss of those to whom they were strongly attached.

Besides all these good qualities, the dog has a graceful shape, formed both for strength and swiftness. It is sometimes irritable, and even fierce and sanguinary in a savage state, which renders it formidable to other animals; but when domesticated it becomes gentle, and it seems happy to attach itself to its master, and to please by devoting its courage, its strength, and its talents in his service. It watches every look, and seems to understand, by the tone of voice in which it is addressed, what it has to do. This faithful creature has no ambition, no personal interest, no desire of vengeance: it fears only to displease. It is full of zeal, of ardour, and of obedience; much more sensible to kindness

than mindful of ill-treatment, nor is it discouraged by bad usage; it bears and forgets it, or remembers it only in attaching itself more devotedly. Far from taking offence and running away, it crouches at its master's feet and licks the hand that strikes it; its only resistance is its patient submission. During the night it guards its master's house, and the most good-natured dog will then become fierce and dangerous. It sleeps so lightly, that not even the slightest noise escapes its observation, and by its loud bark and threatening growl it both gives the alarm to its master and offers a menace to the intruder.

Can we conceive that such intelligence as this is due entirely to man's influence? If it were so, why that distinction between the ferocious tiger and the noble yet courageous dog? Is it not rather that each has its special gifts and uses, and that those capable of attachment to man have just those qualities which supplement where man's fail; as the swiftness of the horse, the strength of the elephant, the keen scent of the dog, added to its fidelity and watchfulness during the hours when its master rests?

Again, may we not deem it providentially

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arranged that amongst those animals more especially destined for the corporeal support of man there is a far less degree of intelligence and capacity of attachment—as with the sheep, the ox, the pig, and our domestic fowls—as if to render the necessity of taking life a less painful act to man? We should dwell upon this wonderful scale of aptitudes so nicely graduated, and we should see the wisdom of God in having given sagacity, instinct, and strength to the brute creation only in a certain degree proportionate to their necessities; and His mercy is manifest in their entire ignorance of their situation. They possess all the pleasures they are capable of enjoying; but they cannot anticipate evil, nor think beyond the present moment, nor penetrate in thought, as we can, into unknown regions. Cruel indeed would be their lot if it were so ordained. As it is, they do not feel their slavery, and if man is only just and kind to the creatures dependent upon him, they have all that God intended. Whilst man, on the contrary, finding nothing in his state of existence worthy to rest upon, reposes in confidence upon the certainty of a future state, where all his powers will be developed and shine with unclouded lustre,

and where he will see God face to face, the ultimate end and cause of his being.

READING LESSON.

ANECDOTES OF DOGS.

A STEAMER of Sunderland, called the *Durham*, was driven on to the coast of Norfolk. The sea was terrible, and the vessel began to break up. The only chance of safety for the crew and passengers was in getting a rope conveyed on shore, to form a means of communication. But who could battle against the surf? There happened to be on board a fine Newfoundland dog. A ring attached to a rope was placed between its teeth, and it sprang into the sea, undaunted by the raging turmoil of the tempest. The dog, however, was scarcely equal to the task, and, after swimming some distance, its strength began to fail, when two brave fishermen on the coast, seeing it could not bring the rope to shore, went out to its rescue, and having all got back safely with the rope, those left on board, to the number of nine, were all saved.

THE BEGGING DOG.

A GENTLEMAN was once passing through a village in a post-chaise, and whilst the horses were being changed, he remarked a small dog on its hind-legs, looking at him in a supplicating manner. The driver said, "If you throw him a penny, sir, you will see what he will do with it." The penny was thrown, and the dog ran with it to the nearest baker's shop, and shortly after returned to his place with a piece of bread in his mouth, which he set about eating with great satisfaction. "He begs for himself, then?" said the gentleman. "Yes, sir, since he has lost his master, a poor blind man, who taught him the habit, which he now continues on his own account."

MOUSTACHE AND HIS FRIEND.

THERE was a little dog called Moustache, who had formed a great friendship for a small black pig called Tonquin. This pig was very apt to get loose and stray into the woods and fields, where he did much mischief. Then the master of the little dog would say, "Moustache, fetch Tonquin;" upon which Moustache, who con-

sidered that duty had a higher claim on him than even friendship, would set out to seek him, and would soon return, drawing the unwilling fugitive by the ear. Notwithstanding this seeming unkindness, when the time came for Tonquin to submit to the course of events, and be killed by the village butcher, poor Moustache had to be chained up, lest in his zeal for his friend he might do some mischief to the butcher.

READING LESSON.

THE WOLF.

THE wolf appears in these pages devoted to the good and useful animals, simply to show that, though it belongs to the same family as the dog, neither training nor kindness can develop in it the same qualities as distinguish the dog from it. There exists an abyss between these two animals which keeps them distinct and mortal foes. For God has created them with instincts too opposed for man to render them similar.

The wolf flies from the society of man, retires into the sombre recesses of the forest, and only

issues forth to satisfy its fierce instincts in its search after food.

Persons have often tried to tame the wolf, but education cannot reclaim it. Once a great naturalist made the attempt, and brought up a young wolf with every care, to render it gentle and docile. During the first year it was manageable and even caressing, and when well fed did not attack either the poultry or other animals; but towards the second year it became savage, and its natural instincts returned. It had to be strongly chained, to prevent accidents and keep it from escaping.

Another wolf had been brought up without restraint in a farm-yard amongst the poultry. This continued until the savage beast was about eighteen months old, when in one night it killed every fowl within its reach, without however eating one.

The dog, instead of flying from the society of man, seeks it; it dislikes solitude; and if sometimes in old age it becomes a little morose, its attachment to its master only ends with its life.

Again, the dog is noble and brave. It will attack the fiercest animals, as the bull, the wild boar,

the stag at bay, no matter what, if its master's voice gives it encouragement to do so. But the wolf is ignoble and cowardly; it prefers to attack sheep, lambs, poultry, little dogs, and fawns. Wolves will not attack man unless he is alone and they in a band of some one or two hundred together. Then wolves are dangerous and deadly enemies. In Poland and Russia they traverse the country in large bodies, following the sledges of travellers, and, notwithstanding the rapidity of the horses, to which fear lends wings, the wolves sometimes gain on them. If the traveller fires and kills one of the troop, the nearest of his companions stop to devour it, but the rest rush on headlong after their victims; and the traveller, to save himself, has to leave his poor horses to satisfy their voracity, whilst he endeavours in the meanwhile to escape.

During the retreat of the great French army from Moscow, when Napoleon Bonaparte had invaded Russia in the year 1812, a brave French grenadier, after having lost most of his companions by cold and hunger, was attacked in a forest of Lithuania by a numerous band of wolves. The soldier put his back against a tree, and drawing his sword, used it so well that the ground

was soon covered with the dead bodies of his assailants: the rest of them fled. The poor soldier then continued his journey through the forest, hoping to get clear of it before being again attacked; but suddenly another troop advanced upon him, and again he placed himself in defence against a tree, and attempted to draw his sword, but the blood upon the blade had congealed, the cold was so excessive, and, unable to defend himself, the poor grenadier was devoured by the merciless pack.

One more tale, to show that, if the wolf is a coward, he is very cunning.

One day, near a town in France named Nemour, a shepherd was guarding a large flock of sheep, near the borders of an extensive forest. The person who tells this anecdote happened to be passing, and seeing the head of a wolf appear out of some bushes, in which it was hidden, he warned the shepherd, who said,—

“Oh, I am not afraid of that one.”

“Still,” replied the passer-by, “your dogs are strong, why not give chase?”

“I shall take care not to do so, for no sooner should I have sent my dogs after it, than another, hidden there, though you may not see it, would

pounce upon my sheep and carry one off; for they understand each other like pickpockets in a fair.

"That is curious," said the gentleman. "I should like to ascertain the fact; so set on your dogs, and I will pay for the sheep."

The shepherd consented, and sent his dogs after the wolf, which set off at a moderate trot, in order to engage their attention the longer. Some instants after, a bigger wolf crept out of the underwood, pounced upon one of the flock, and carried it off into the forest.

The sheep and lamb are used in Scripture as the type of all that is good, and gentle, and innocent; the wolf is referred to as expressive of all that is cruel and evil. "I am the Good Shepherd," said our Lord, "and know my sheep, and are known of them; . . . and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (St. John x.) Again, in St. Luke x: "Go thy ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs amongst wolves." "For I know this," says St. Paul, "that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

Further, Christ says in his Sermon on the

Mount, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

READING LESSON.

THE BIRD AND THE INSECT.

SOME one writes, man could not have lived without the bird, which alone could save him from the insect and the reptile; but the bird had lived without man. The eagle had reigned on his Alpine throne, the swallow had not less performed her yearly migrations. Without waiting for human listeners, the nightingale had still chanted his sublime hymn. To them man is not the centre and poise of the world; their little hearts are glad with the joy which finds completeness in the life God has given them, yet they work for man, for God has so ordained it.

How, you will say, can the thoughtless, joyous bird be of use to man? Ah, that is one of the many teachings which nature reveals when we question her. Know you not that though the bird eats corn and fruit, that it seeks also the

insect and its eggs, that feeds entirely on the produce of our fields and gardens? Were birds destroyed, all our harvests would be devoured by insects, whose increase would soon outnumber a plague of locusts. Here, again, we trace providential design. But if the insect is so destructive, why does he exist?

Because the insect has a large work to do; and small, almost invisible, as some are, the insect has a definite place in creation. Its duty is to destroy. In those lands where great heat renders every dead thing a danger to the living, the insect abounds, and a dead body, whether of man or animal, scarcely touches the earth before it is attacked, and soon the bones alone are left. The vulture, another of nature's scavengers, is moderate in appetite compared to the insect, who, in four-and-twenty hours, consumes twice its own weight!

Tropical insects pierce, cut, and rend with their nippers, their pincers, their teeth, their saws, their horns, their augers. They are armed more formidably than our modern armies with all the terrible inventions of modern times. The hardiest of men in those fiery climates declare that of all dangers and of all pains, they dread

most the wounds of insects. Frequently invisible, and in number legion, how can man oppose them? They possess endless means of attack: they walk, swim, glide, fly, and we breathe them. Some kind of quite invisible insects to the naked eye are now thought to be the cause of many wide-spread illnesses. What would be the fate of man given over to the insects? An unfortunate wretch in a state of intoxication fell down near a carcass already a prey to the insects. They did not distinguish between the dead and the living creature; they invaded every inlet—the eyes, nose, mouth, and ears. It was impossible to save him. Our grandest works cannot defy these terrible legions. They pierce the timbers of the stoutest ship, and towns undermined, are amongst the ravages of certain kinds. La Rochelle, a town in France, has more than one edifice that trembles on rotten timbers, devoured by the termite; and some years since Holland suffered an inundation because the piles which strengthen its dykes gave way, undermined by a worm named the tarel, which consumes wet wood, as the termite feeds on dry wood.

The tarel is often a foot in length, but it is

not seen, as it works within the wood, so that suddenly a beam will give way, or a ship founders at sea, for man has not the instinct of the bird. They are ever on the watch. The lapwing is the guardian of Holland, and imprudent is any one to destroy its eggs. The ant-eater is the enemy of the termite. In Guiana the termite dwellings are enormous hillocks, fifteen feet high, and men only venture to attack them by means of gunpowder; but the ant-eater dares to enter, and devours them and their eggs.

With us the cockchafer flourishes and devours vegetation; but the swallow and other insect-eating birds make havoc amongst them, and it is folly to kill them because they rob us of a few measures of corn, or taste our fruits.

Even in temperate climates, the increase of insect life would be prodigious without the bird. The swallow eats one thousand flies in the day; a couple of sparrows carry to their nest four thousand three hundred caterpillars or beetles weekly; a tomtit three hundred daily.

We have yet but a faint idea of the services rendered us by the bird. The wagtail, the starling, and a kind of heron, take out with their bill a nasty worm that gets into the skin of the

ox, and sucks its blood. The magpie hunts after the insects concealed beneath the bark of trees; the goldfinch prevents the spread of the thistle, by feeding on its seeds.

Our garden birds strip our fruit-trees of grub and caterpillar. The blackbird and the wren feed on the eggs and the larva of insects. The crows and the rooks bore into the ground, and seize on the white worm, which, three years before turning into a cockchafer, gnaws at the roots of our grasses. Here we stop, although the uses of birds are only touched upon. Enough has been said to make every child think before he ventures to take the life of anything that God has created. Yes, even of the insect, for every creature has been endowed with life for some purpose, and if we cannot at first sight perceive the uses hidden to view, we may feel sure that they exist, and that with keener insight into the book of nature we should see the imprint of the Creator's hand in every page.

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